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A

DISCOURSE

OF

LOGOMACHYS,

OR

Controverſys about WORDS,

So common among Learned Men.

MVSEVM

To which is Added,

A DISSERTATION concerning METEORS of STILE, or FALSE SUBLIMITY.

Both written in *Latin*,

By *SAMUEL WERENFELSIUS*

of *Baſil*,

And Tranſlated into *Engliſh*.

LONDON;

Printed for *W. Taylor* at the Ship in *Pater-noſter-Row*, and *E. Sanger* at the *Middle-Temple-Gate* in *Fleetſtreet*. M. DCC. XI.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

3 Hf

THE *Author's Dedication,*

TO THE

Right Reverend Father in God,

GILBERT,

Lord Biſhop of *Sarum.*

My Lord,

THE common Excuſe which Authors make for preſuming to dedicate their Labours to Perſons of Diſtinction, is, that the Name of an honourable Pa-

tron prefix'd to their Works, will recommend 'em to the Learned World, and ſecure 'em from ill-natur'd Cenſures. If the Reaſon were juſt, no Man, I am ſure, can urge it with a better Right than my ſelf. For what Name is more univerſally celebrated, or more conſpicuous in the Republick of Literature, than your Lordſhip's? Or what is more able to give this Treatiſe a general Recommendation, and preſerve it to late Poſterity? Whoſe Judgment of Things is more accurate, and yet, my Lord, who judges with greater Candour? Who does not acquieſce in your Opinion? And who wou'd offer to condemn what you approve? In a word, who wou'd except againſt theſe Diſcourſes, if my Lord of *Sarum* ſhou'd pleaſe to honour them with his Patronage?

But, I muſt confeſs, this is not the Reaſon of my Addreſſing to Your Lordſhip: for tho it is a very common one, yet I cou'd not think

think it ſufficient; ſince no wiſe Man will conclude this Trifle has Your Lordſhip's Approbation, becauſe I have ventur'd to preſent it to You. This can lay no ſuch Obligation on Your Lordſhip, nor have I the Vanity to expect it ſhou'd. The Diſſertations, I am ſenſible, will ſtand in need of an indulgent Reader: but Your Lordſhip has made appear, by Your incomparable Hiſtory of the Reformation, and Your other excellent Writings, and by Your private Converſation, that You have regard only to Truth; and that a Judgment, accompliſh'd with ſo much Erudition, and ripen'd by ſo long a Practice, is not to be corrupted.

The only thing, therefore, which induc'd me to inſcribe theſe Papers to Your Lordſhip, was the Admiration of Your Virtues, which are ſo uncommon in this Age; and which have fill'd me with a profound Reſpect ever ſince I firſt had the

the Honour of your Lordſhip's Converſation in my own Country; whence I waited on You to *Heidelburgh*, where I was with you ſeveral Days, inſtructing my ſelf by Your Diſcourſe. Afterwards I ſaw You again at the *Hague*; and laſtly at *Cleves*, in the Elector's Court, where I took my final Leave of Your Lordſhip.

Pardon me, my Lord, if an obſcure Man, as I am, preſumes to remind You of that Time, which I eſteem the happieſt Part of my Life, and can never remember but with inexpreſſible Pleaſure. Suffer me to boaſt of this in Publick, ſomething more immoderately, than in ſtrict Decency I ought to do. And if your Lordſhip will pleaſe to put a favourable Conſtruction on my giving the preſent Teſtimony of my Veneration for You, which began at that time, and has poſſeſs'd my Heart ever ſince, and which I cou'd no longer conceal,

ceal, I ſhall obtain the Sum of my Deſires.

As to the following Book, Your Lordſhip will judg of it, according to Your uſual manner. There is nothing in it to deſerve Your Liking, but the Averſion which the Author expreſſes to thoſe vain Diſputes, which divide the Church, and his Sollicitude to reſtrain ſo pernicious an Evil. Your Lordſhip will be concern'd, perhaps, to ſee how weakly I have executed ſo good a Deſign, which may perſuade You to engage ſome abler Hand to undertake it. But I am perfectly eaſy as to this; ſince I am not ſeeking Your Approbation, which I cannot merit, but Your Good-will, which You are wont to beſtow even on the Undeſerving.

May God Almighty long continue Your Lordſhip the Ornament of *Great Britain*, and the whole Chriſtian Church, and multiply upon You the beſt of Bleſſings.

Baſil, Nov. 4. 1701.

PREFACE.

'TIS usual for Men to be less careful of their Words and Actions among their familiar Acquaintance, than when they appear in Publick, and so it was with me in composing this Treatise: which consists, as will readily be guess'd by the Diversity of the Stile and Manner, of Academical Theses, *as they call them, wrote at several Times, for a Disputation. Labours of this Nature seldom travel beyond the Place where they are born, and are there read but by few, and that with no great Attention. I was not in much pain for the Judgment of my learned Countrymen, because they are my Friends, and wou'd be satisfy'd on easy Terms; especially since they expect nothing uncommon from me. I have follow'd therefore the Heat of Invention, as the Variety of that happen'd to lead me, rather than any Order; and was not so curious of my Thoughts, Words and Method, as I shou'd have been, if I had intended to please the rigid Censors, with whom the Commonwealth of Literature at present abounds. I ought, indeed, to have revis'd my Theses, and corrected them, before I had given them the Title of a Discourse; and accordingly I*

was about to have done it, but I quickly chang'd my Mind: for a ſtrict Amendment, I found, wou'd have ſtruck out almoſt the Whole. If the Reader ſhou'd ask what Neceſſity I was under to publiſh them thus crudely, I might anſwer, they were extorted from me by the repeated Importunitys of my Friends. But this Excuſe has ſo often been falſly alledg'd, that now no body will believe it, tho it is true. The only Reaſon, then, of my conſenting to publiſh theſe Papers as they are, is, that I thought they wou'd be of Service to the World, notwithſtanding all their Defects. For it is impoſſible to ſay what an Advantage true Knowledg and Piety wou'd receive, if all who apply themſelves to Letters, whether as Authors or Readers, were duly ſenſible, how many Diſputes there are in all Arts and Sciences merely about Words, and how few Controverſys have been carry'd on without them; if they wou'd reflect on the Miſchief of this to the Intereſt of Religion and Learning, and diſtinguiſh the ſeveral Kinds and Symptoms of this Diſtemper; and, in a word, if they conſider'd the Cauſes of it both internal and outward, and what Remedys are to be imploy'd either for Prevention or Cure.

I have not urg'd under theſe Heads all that might have been ſaid, or was moſt proper, but what occur'd to me in the Hurry of Writing: I have illuſtrated the whole

by ſuch Examples, as my Memory (which is not very exact) furniſh'd to me; in which if I happen ſometimes to be miſtaken, the ingenious Reader may ſubſtitute more pertinent in their room.

The Subject deſerves to be treated by ſome ſuperior Genius, who has a better Judgment, and a larger Fund of Erudition and Experience to ſupport it: I ſhou'd be glad to ſee this perform'd, and in the mean time the preſent Eſſay will not be unuſeful.

I was deſir'd by my Friends to annex a Diſſertation which I writ, concerning Meteors of Stile, *when I read Lectures on Eloquence in our Academy. I cou'd not refuſe their Requeſt; eſpecially ſince ſome conſiderable Perſons, into whoſe Hands it has fallen, were pleas'd to aſſure me, that they had read it with Satisfaction. Nor was it at all improper, I thought, to join theſe two Treatiſes together: for as it is a common Error in Logical Diſputes, to confound a mere Verbal Difference with a Real; ſo in Rhetorick, they who affect Sublimity, are frequently betray'd into* Meteors of Stile, *or Fuſtian. If I have any where offended againſt my own Rules, in either of theſe Reſpects, it may ſerve to inform the Reader what ſtrict Precaution is neceſſary againſt thoſe Faults, which they, who write concerning them, cannot even at the ſame time avoid.*

THE

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CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Of the Name and Signification of the word Logomachy; *or what is meant by Peoples contending merely about Words.*

MY Design in this Essay is to apply a Remedy to a most pernicious Distemper, which has long afflicted the Learned World. Tho a perfect Cure is rather to be desir'd than expected, yet if I can give any check to it, I shall not think my Labour lost: For it's next to impossible to tell how much contending merely about Words there is almost in every Point, in which learned Men are divided; and how many Quarrels and wrangling Disputes, with which Learning is so miserably pester'd, wou'd immediately vanish, cou'd we but once distinguish Verbal Differences from Real. I am not unacquainted with the Stubbornness of this Distemper, the Difficulty of its Cure, nor how unacceptable it is even to the Patient to have it examin'd. But when all's done, a Patient is not to be given over for his Peevishness, or because he loaths the taking of Physick; nor is a Physician to be discourag'd by every Difficulty, but to do his

Chap. 1. beſt, and leave the Succeſs of his Endeavours to the Divine Providence.

—I hope I may be excus'd if I call this Contending about Words a Diſtemper, before I ſhew the Reſemblance it has to the Diſeaſes of the Body; having not only the Examples of the Philoſophers, who call all the Errors of the Mind and Will by this Name, but the Authority of the Apoſtle *Paul* for ſo doing; 1 Tim. 6. who giving a Deſcription of one who conſented not to the *Doctrine which is according to Godlineſs*, makes it part of his Character, that he was νοσῶν περὶ λογομαχίας, ſick of the Logomachy, the ſad Diſtemper I am writing of, *Contending about Words.*

Now to prevent Miſtakes, we muſt be ſure to diſtinguiſh contending *about* Words, from contending *with* or *by* Words; for the Debates of the Learned about Matters of Importance, whether by Word or Writing, if they are manag'd with Temper, and have nothing in view but finding out the Truth, are ſo far from being Diſeaſes of the Mind, that they are indeed the beſt Preſervatives againſt them: Argumentation being to the Mind what Exerciſe is to the Body; it confirms its Conſtitution, keeps it from the Contagion of Error, and prevents it from imbibing Opinions, however plauſible, which are not ſupported with ſolid Reaſon. But when, inſtead of calm Reaſoning, we have Quarrels, Wrangling and Noiſe; when ſifting out the Truth is the leaſt part of our Deſign, and inſtead of debating the Matter with Moderation like Scholars and Gentlemen, we rather ſeem to fight Prizes like Fellows in a *Bear-Garden*, making it the main of our Buſineſs

ſineſs to expoſe, abuſe, revile and inſult our Adverſarys, as if trampling on a Man wou'd really make us the taller: If when we can't fairly get the better of our Antagoniſt, we endeavour, all we can, to trick him with our Sophiſms; all this is Quarrelling and Fighting rather than Diſputing, and Words (which were given to Man for a nobler purpoſe) become only the Inſtruments of our Rage. Now that I may not always call this Luſt of Quarrelling by the name of a Diſeaſe (it's indeed too mild an Appellation) What a Poiſon, what a Plague is it to Learning, to Religion, and to the Peace and Proſperity of the whole World! —Its Effects are indeed very ſcandalous, and I pray what are its Cauſes? (for I can't but hint at them by the by) Are they any better? How much of it proceeds from Mens haughty Pride, and an unreaſonable impudent Ambition of lording it over Mens Conſciences, inſlaving their Minds, and making them think and ſpeak no otherwiſe than we, forſooth, wou'd have them? Oh 'tis a mighty buſineſs with ſome People to gain Proſelytes, and add to their Number, as 'tis with Tyrants to multiply their Slaves. And if any are ſo hardy as to croſs their Deſigns, by denying their Aſſent to theſe Mens Opinions (eſpecially if they are likely to influence others alſo to do the like) nothing will ſerve, but preſently they muſt be treated as publick Enemys. Immediately they divide, and the Game begins; every Man is at his Poſt, and defends his Quarter: Scoffs and Reproaches come thick and threefold, and what they want of Argument they ſupply with Calumny: *What, won't they believe as we*

Chap. 1. *do? Are we ſuch Blockheads, ſuch Buzzards, as to have our Arguments thus rejected, our Reaſons thus ſlighted? We are as Wiſe, as Learned as themſelves, and ſo they ſhall find.* Now whether this be rather to be laught at, or lamented, I ſhall not at preſent determine; but can't help obſerving, that all the while they are thus together by the Ears, about the weighty Buſineſs of making themſelves Heads of a Party, or ſuch like, they wou'd fain perſuade us that Truth alone is what they are concern'd for: Nay, I have almoſt the Charity to believe (conſidering how little Men are us'd to know, and how apt to flatter themſelves) that they ſometimes verily think as they ſpeak. But be that as it will, one wou'd think a ſerious Lover of Truth ſhou'd eſteem the Erroneous the Objects of his Pity, rather than of his Hatred. A Gentleman that has his Cellar well ſtor'd with rich and generous Wines, wou'd be thought, I fancy, to diſcover a ſtrange Temper, if he ſhou'd fall out with his poor Neighbours for not being ſo well provided, or abuſe them for not being ſo capable of diſtinguiſhing betwixt good and bad Wine as he. And if I having, in my Opinion, a very beautiful charming Wife, ſhou'd quarrel with every Man I met for not admiring her as I did; I'm afraid the ill-natur'd World wou'd hardly forbear calling me Coxcomb. Men are generally ambitious of enjoying what they love without a Rival: And who has not obſerv'd how unwilling moſt Men are to have others thought as knowing as themſelves? Have you found out the Truth? You are a happy Man; you have your Deſire: But, ſay you, my Neighbours will

will not believe it. The greater is their Miſ- Chap. 1.
fortune, ſay I: And was ever any Man in his Wits angry with another for being leſs happy than himſelf? What is it diſturbs you? Why the Truth of the matter is this, Learned Men hate Contradiction, for the ſame reaſon as covetous Men do other Peoples Liberality; they reckon it reproaches them. They who diſſent from our Opinions, ſeem to call our Learning and Judgment into queſtion, and to prefer themſelves before us; and this touches us to the quick; Fleſh and Blood can't bear it. I ſay they ſeem to do ſo, for they don't always do ſo in reality. Men are not always of the ſame Opinions with others, for whom they have the greateſt Veneration; not becauſe they won't, but becauſe they can't. 'Tis not in our Power to believe what and when we pleaſe. Wou'd you have me come over to any of your Opinions? In the firſt place, let me hear your Reaſons, produce the Arguments with which you was convinc'd. Am I notwithſtanding too ſtiff in my own Opinion? Why, 'tis becauſe your Reaſons do not appear to me ſufficient, nor your Arguments concluſive. If they be ſo in reality, I'm ſorry I can't ſee them in the ſame Light, and with the ſame Eyes as you do. What makes you angry? Why, ſay you, one of us muſt needs have a very great Defect in our Eyeſight. Perhaps not; the ſharpeſt Sight can't ſee every thing, and a Fool may ſtumble upon that which the niceſt Obſerver in the World never took any notice of; So that, if in this particular I ſee more than you, I may be more happy than wiſe; if I do not, I am ſo much the more unhappy, as I can't

Chap. 1. be made ſenſible that I am in an Error.

But to return from this Digreſſion (tho I hope I have not been far out of my way) be pleas'd to remember, that beſides this contending with Words already inſiſted on, there are too often Contentions merely *about* Words, to the Conſideration of which we now proceed as the principal Deſign of this Eſſay.

Since by *Words* then we often underſtand not only a Compoſition of Letters and Syllables, but things of no moment, contending about Words may ſignify contending about Trifles. And what a conſiderable number of Books are written upon Subjects not worth a Thought? Who can forbear ſmiling, when he hears grave bearded Doctors diſpute, whether the Fiſh which ſwallow'd *Jonah* was Male or Female? With which Foot *Æneas* at his Landing firſt ſtept upon the *Italian* Shore? What was the Shape of a *Roman* Button? and a thouſand other ſuch ridiculous Queſtions. 'Tis well ſuch Controverſys are written in Latin; were they not, how wou'd they expoſe their Authors (and perhaps Learning it ſelf) to the Contempt even of Watermen, Porters and Plowmen? What wou'd Philoſophers, Schoolmen, yea Divines themſelves be thought of? Who cou'd be otherwiſe than amaz'd, to ſee the *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern* Churches divide upon the Queſtion, whether Prieſts ought to wear long Beards? or whether Biſhops might wear Rings? Of much the like Importance was that famous Controverſy between St. *Jerom* and St. *Auſtin*, concerning the Plant which ſhadow'd *Jonah*, whether 'twas to be call'd a Gourd, or an Ivy-Tree. *Auſtin*

confeſſes

confeſſes that the Church was in an Uproar when *Jerom*'s Verſion was read, who thought it an Ivy-Tree: and *Jerom* complains of ſome who accus'd him of Sacrilege on that account; and he is no leſs ſharp upon *Auſtin*, if *John Calvin* may be credited. Indeed I have often wonder'd to ſee Learned Men and Pretenders to Wiſdom, contend as earneſtly as if it were for Liberty and Property, when it ſignifies not one half-penny to themſelves, or any one elſe, which way the Buſineſs is decided: But then the wonder in a great meaſure ceas'd, as ſoon as I became ſenſible that the Diſpute was not about the things of which they ſeem'd to diſpute, but about the Learning and Wit of the Diſputants. You are miſtaken if you think *Scaliger* and *Cardan* two ſuch Coxcombs, as to diſpute in earneſt which had moſt Hairs on its Back, the Kid or the Goat? The Queſtion in debate was, which of thoſe two Gentlemen was the better Scholar and more ingenious Man: Some thinking nothing more likely to advance their Reputation in Learning, than their being able to talk well of empty inſignificant Subjects; but when all is done, trifling Queſtions are no better than Trifles, ſet them require never ſo much Learning and Ingenuity to decide them: So true is that of *Martial*, Chap. 1.

Turpe eſt difficiles habere nugas,
Et ſtultus labor eſt ineptiarum.

If we take Words in a proper ſenſe, contending about them may have different Significations. Sometimes we diſpute about Words

Chap. 1. deſignedly and profeſſedly, and to good purpoſe; as when we endeavour to explain the meaning of a Law, a Will, or the Holy Scriptures: tho perhaps this may, in effect, be rather thought arguing about Things, than bickering about Words. Sometimes Words, as ſuch, are thought by learned Men worthy of their Conſideration: Thus Grammarians and Criticks treat of the Pronunciation, manner of Writing, Declining, Signification, and Conſtruction of Words; and I ſhou'd be the laſt who ſhou'd blame them for it, wou'd they allow more of their time for nobler Studys, and if they cou'd perſuade themſelves to be of different Opinions concerning theſe Matters without quarrelling. But the Scolding of the Grammarians is quite grown into a Proverb. Tranſlate an Expreſſion, or uſe but a Word which theſe Gentlemen pleaſe to think improper, and you have great luck if you be not expos'd in Print as one of the greateſt Fools under the Sun. But in the mean time have a care how you accuſe them of Barbariſms or Blunders: They wou'd ſooner forgive you if you charg'd them with Clipping and Coining. What Work did *Friſchlinus* and *Cruſius* make heretofore? They were ſo enrag'd that they cou'd not find Words bad enough to beſtow upon one another; they call'd one another all the Knaves, Fools and Beaſts they cou'd think of. And pray what did they differ about? No Trifle, you may be ſure; you have *Friſchlinus*'s word for it. What then? Why truly *Cruſius* (or *cruel Mr. Crucible*, as his witty Adverſary nicknames him) takes upon him to give Rules relating to Nouns, Participles and Supines,

in

in an improper place of the Syntax. And was ever ſuch a thing as that known? What a ſad Man was this *Crucius*, and what abundance of Reaſon had his Antagoniſt to be angry? I have upon this occaſion made uſe of theſe two Mens Names, not to reflect upon them, but to warn others not to quarrel about a Word, whether of Latin, or any other more uncommon Language; Skill in Languages being ſo apt to make Men proud and vain, when notwithſtanding it's a certain Truth, that however neceſſary and commendable it be, it is neither Learning nor Wiſdom, but at beſt the Road which leads to it. That I may not ſeem to advance ſo dangerous a Propoſition of my own Head, pray hear what the truly learned *Brian Walton* has ſaid on this Subject; and ſurely he who, with ſo great ſucceſs, had taken ſuch vaſt Pains, and was ſo deſervedly famous for his vaſt Acquaintance with the Languages, cou'd not well be ſuppos'd to ſpeak any thing out of prejudice, that might unjuſtly leſſen the Reputation of Philological Studys. In his *Apparatus Bibl. Proleg.* 1. §. 24. after many things very handſomly and judiciouſly ſaid to recommend to us the Study of the Languages, he thus concludes: "Before I "put an end to this Diſſertation, I can't but "take notice of the Superciliouſneſs of thoſe "Pretenders to Learning; who tho perhaps "they know no more than the Names of the "Sciences, have no ſooner got a ſmatter-"ing of the Languages, than they are won-"derfully puff'd up, grow inſolent, and treat "Men, ten times their Superiours in all ſorts "of valuable real Knowledg, with as much "Contempt Chap. 1.

Chap. 1. " Contempt as if they were not worthy to
" carry their Books after 'em. Such ought
" to know, that the Knowledg of Words is
" no more than a Path to lead us to the
" Knowledg of Things, and valuable only as
" it ſerves that Deſign, this latter being that
" which entitles a Man truly learned: (Lan-
" guages being as the Shell, and the Knowledg
" of Things the Kernel.) They therefore
" who make no farther Advances towards
" Learning, than to underſtand the Langua-
" ges, are like thoſe who ſit down in the
" Porch and never enter the Houſe, nor view
" the Rooms: And conſequently may be
" call'd Sciolists, Grammarians or Criticks;
" but can never merit the Character of Lear-
" ned Men." Thus far Dr. *Walton*, whoſe Authority perhaps may have ſome Influence on thoſe Gentlemen who wou'd think it an unpardonable Preſumption in ſuch as me, to pretend to correct 'em.

But I muſt not forget the Criticks: If any in the World may be ſaid to make a Noiſe about nothing, Theſe are the Men. What a Company of Buzzards were our Fore-fathers, ſays one, to read ſuch a Word or Expreſſion of an old Author, as they did! They ought to have read it, as I have corrected it. You corrected it! ſays a ſecond, I beg your Pardon; I was the firſt who corrected it. No matter who corrected it, ſays a third, for it's inſufferable Nonſenſe, and a matter of dangerous Conſequence to alter a Letter!—— Why, Sir, What's the matter? Pleaſe to inform us, if it be not above the reach of us ordinary Scholars, what 'tis you differ about. Not a ſmall Matter you may aſſure your ſelf;

but

but about the right pointing a Sentence, or Chap. 1.
ſpelling a Word: for inſtance, whether you ought to read *Vergilius* or *Virgilius*; *Agellius* or *A. Gellius*; *Carimonia* or *Ceremonia*; *Munditia* or *Munditie*.

I wou'd by no means endeavour to leſſen the juſt Eſteem the World has for thoſe who give us correct Editions of antient Authors. I know it requires vaſt Reading, and a good Judgment, as well as a good Stock of Patience, to free thoſe Authors from the Injurys done 'em by the Ignorance and Barbarity of former Ages. None but *Hercules* cou'd cleanſe *Augeas*'s Stable. But then it might be conſider'd too, that tho that was a great Work, yet 'twas not the moſt glorious of *Hercules*'s Labours. I cou'd wiſh therefore, that theſe ingenious Gentlemen wou'd learn from his Example, not to content themſelves with ſuch *comparatively* mean Performances, as the correcting Words or Expreſſions of other Men; however not to contend about 'em, as about Matters of Life and Death; but to imploy ſome of their Time and Parts in confuting practical Errors, and in ſearching after ſomething which may be of Uſe to Mankind; ſomething apt to enlighten the Underſtandings, or reform the Manners of an ignorant and licentious Age. But inſtead of this (to uſe the Words of a great Critick) ſome are ſo ſtudious of Antiquity, that they almoſt forget their own Chriſtian Names; are continually poring upon old worm-eaten Manuſcripts, and decay'd Monuments, where they may look every Day in the Year, from Sun-riſing to Sun-ſet, and never be the wiſer. But if they find any thing that's new, be it ever ſo trifling, they

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Chap. 1. are immediately, in their own Conceits, as Great as *Auguſtus*. No wonder then if they quarrel about Trifles who mind little or nothing elſe!

But of all Contentions about Words, I know none more fooliſh in it ſelf, or miſchievous in its Conſequences, than when Men believe themſelves (or at leaſt pretend) to diſpute about things of the greateſt moment, when in truth their Differences are merely about Words: when they mean the ſame thing, but expreſſing themſelves different ways, and not having the Acuteneſs to underſtand each other, they fall together by the ears. This is juſt the ſame as if an *Engliſhman* ſhou'd challenge a *Perſian* for not putting off his Hat to him, interpreting it as an Affront, when at the ſame time the well-meaning *Perſian* omitted nothing to teſtify his Civility which he had been acquainted with in his own Country. Such Diſputants, to Men of clearer Heads, are no leſs ridiculous than two blind Men wou'd be who ſhou'd flouriſh their Swords very angrily, as if they wou'd cut one another as ſmall as Atoms; but were plac'd at ſuch a diſtance, that they cou'd do one another no manner of Hurt. For, like them, theſe Contenders about Words combat with nothing but the Imaginations of their Brains, fighting with a Scare-Crow of their own Inventions, not having a true Notion of the Queſtion debated, nor wherein they agree with or differ from their Adverſary; if there be indeed a Difference, as oftentimes there's none at all.

In order to prevent, what I can, ſo great and miſchievous an Evil; I ſhall, in the firſt place,

place, ſee who are chargeable with it; in the next place, conſider the ſeveral Kinds of it; then ſhew the Greatneſs of the Evil, then its Cauſes, then its Symptoms; and laſt of all, conſider what may be proper for its Cure. Chap. 2.

CHAP. II.

Who are guilty of contending about Words.

I Know of no Sorts nor Conditions of Men who are not often guilty of contending merely about Words: But, I think, I may ſafely ſay it's moſt of all practis'd there, where one wou'd leaſt expect it; I mean amongſt the learned Part of Mankind. Learning was undoubtedly deſign'd, and does naturally tend to help the Underſtanding; but (whatever be the Cauſe) it's certain, that it often happens here, as in Phyſick, that no Men are oftner ſick, than they who frequently doſe themſelves with Medicines. Let any Man take a view of the ſeveral Parts of Learning, and ſtrictly examine their Diſputes, and he will be amaz'd to find ſuch vaſt Diſcord between thoſe who ſo little diſagree.

One wou'd think Theology too pure and holy to be infected with ſuch a noiſom Diſeaſe: And yet that Doctrine which ſhou'd ſpeak nothing but Love, Unity, Peace and Concord, is by many made no other uſe of than

Chap. 2. than to be an Argument for their Contentions; and new Words are found out to divide Chriſtians into Sects and Partys, of which St. *Paul* complain'd long ago. It's too generally known for me to tell the World, what a hot Controverſy there was heretofore, whether we might ſay, as the *Greeks*, there are three Hypoſtaſes in the Deity, or with the *Latins*, that there is but one. The *Latins* by the Word *Hypoſtaſis*, underſtood what we mean by Subſtance or Eſſence; and therefore rather choſe to ſay, there were three Perſons, than three Hypoſtaſes in the Deity. The *Greeks*, on the other hand, reckon'd it intolerable to ſay, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit had but one Hypoſtaſis; judging ſuch an Aſſertion wou'd too much favour the Hereſy of *Sabellius*. Well, what was to be done in this Matter? Why, truly nothing wou'd ſerve the Turn, but a Synod muſt be conven'd to compoſe this Difference: Accordingly the Biſhops were call'd together from all Quarters; from *Italy*, *Egypt*, *Arabia*, and *Lybia*; who after they had heard both ſides clearly, perceiv'd that the whole Controverſy, manag'd with ſo much Uncharitableneſs, was a mere Logomachy, a Contention about Words. Nor have other Doctors of the Church been leſs faulty: Some of 'em treating of the Doctrine of the Trinity, uſe the words *Cauſe* and *Effect*: others reject them as dangerous: Some talk of *Order* between the Perſons of the Sacred Trinity; others can't bear to hear it: The *Latins* make it the Property of the *Son* to be the Image of the Father; the *Greeks* think it common to him with the Holy Spirit: *Baſil* won't have the *Son* call'd the

the Offspring of the Father; others have thought it a matter indifferent. That famous Controverſy, which made ſuch a Diſtraction betwixt the *Greek* and *Latin* Churches concerning the Proceſſion of the Holy Spirit, whether 'twas from the Father and the Son, or from the Father by the Son, was, in the Opinion of many, moſtly about Words. And if we may believe a modern Philoſopher, the Difference between *Neſtorius* and the Orthodox was much of the ſame Nature, and he was unjuſtly condemn'd by the Council at *Epheſus:* but, however that was, I believe we may not ſcruple to affirm, that ſome heretofore (and perhaps others at this Day in the *Greek* Church) have with *Neſtorius* unwarily deny'd the Virgin *Mary* to be the Mother of God, who mean the ſame thing with us, and do not with *Neſtorius* divide one Chriſt into two Chriſts. In the Time of *Charles* the Great, there was a mighty Stir on this Occaſion: *Felix*, a *Spaniſh* Biſhop, taught that Chriſt, according to his Human Nature, was not the Son of God *properly*, but only by Adoption: An Aſſertion in ſenſe not much unlike that of a Queſtion afterwards debated by the Schoolmen, whether Chriſt, according to his Human Nature, was the Servant of God; as alſo to that which at this time troubles ſome, *viz.* Whether Jeſus Chriſt, as Mediator, ought to be worſhip'd. The Queſtion, as I ſaid, being then, Whether Chriſt, conſider'd in his Human Nature, was the proper or adopted Son of God. Chap. 2.

Felix thought him the Son of God only by Adoption; of which Opinion alſo was *Elipandus* of *Toledo*, who was ſo fierce for it, that he

Chap. 2. he call'd thoſe who were of another Mind, the Servants, Diſciples, and Fore-runners of Anti-Chriſt; and treated them as Hereticks fit to be rooted out from off the Face of the Earth: But Pope *Adrian*, thinking this Notion border'd upon the Hereſy of *Neſtorius*, of two Perſons in Chriſt, condemn'd it as Heretical in three Councils; in one of which the Emperor *Charles* was ſaid to be preſent. And yet *George Calixtus* has fully prov'd the whole Controverſy a mere Logomachy.

They who know any thing of the Schoolmen, need not to be inform'd what Contentions about Words there are in the numerous Controverſys between the *Nominals* and *Reals*, the *Thomiſts* and *Scotiſts*; how merely for Diſputation ſake, they have obſcur'd Theology with dark barbarous Words and Phraſes; and diſputed about 'em, rather than want Matter of Contention. Is it not a very pretty Enquiry, Whether the Sacraments be in any Predicament? Whether Baptiſm perform'd in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be valid? Whether an Aſs can drink Baptiſm? I cou'd give other Inſtances, but am aſham'd to mention 'em. I wiſh Theology were at this Day free from ſuch Stuff, of which wiſe and pious Men have often and do ſtill complain to little purpoſe. The Emperor *Juſtinian*, ſays *Joh. Claubergius*, in his Inſtitutions did us the Service, and himſelf the Honour, by abrogating the ſcrupulous Obſervations of ſtarcht, ſubtil Forms and Nicetys, to reduce the Study and Practice of the Law to its native Simplicity and Plainneſs. It wou'd be happy for the Chriſtian World, cou'd it find a Man who wou'd do

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ſo much in favour of Theology; who re- Chap. 2.
jecting litigious Intricacys, needleſs Curioſitys, and vain Nicetys, which the School-Philoſophy has introduc'd into our Theology, wou'd reinſtate it in its antient Majeſtick Purity. If, what *Hen. Alting* ſlightly attempted, under every Head of Divinity Verbal Controverſys were ſeparated from Real; and, in every Controverſy, what *did not* really concern the Queſtion in Debate, was diſtinguiſh'd from what *did*: a multitude of Diſputations wou'd be for ever ſilenc'd. But this is rather to be wiſh'd than expected in our Days: as it's ſafer to lament the Faults of our Age than to reprove 'em.

As for the Lawyers, I have little to ſay to 'em; they are Gentlemen I don't care to be much concern'd with: but when I ſee Books written on the Queſtion, Whether Brutes are ſubject to Law, or capable of doing Right and Wrong; I ſuſpect them alſo ſometimes guilty of contending about Words. For, let 'em but explain what they mean by the word *Law*, and the Inquiry will ſoon be at an end. Beſides, how apt are they to be angry, if any unacquainted with Law-Terms don't call every thing by the ſame Name as they do, tho they mean the ſame thing? And, I can't but mention, what I have often obſerv'd of thoſe who endeavour to explain the Law of Nature, that they frequently contend merely about Words, when they enquire, Whether any thing be of Natural Right? One tells you, for inſtance, that the Eighth Commandment is not part of the Law of Nature: Another immediately is grievouſly ſcandaliz'd at ſuch an Aſſertion,

Chap. 2. and not without reaſon, if both meant the ſame thing. But if by the Law of Nature no more be meant than that Original Natural Right reſulting from that State in which Mankind was ſuppos'd to be, antecedent to any Compact, and before the Diviſion of Things; the difference wou'd ſoon vaniſh.

The Phyſicians, one wou'd think, of all Men ſhou'd have little occaſion of contending about Words; ſince the Subject of their Diſquiſitions are things which come under the Notice of the Senſes. And yet I'm afraid they will hardly be able to clear themſelves from the Charge, that they oftentimes diſpute more of the *Name* of a Diſeaſe, than of its *Nature*, and of the Method of its Cure. May they not be ſuſpected to quarrel about Words, who, notwithſtanding their different Hypotheſes in Phyſick, in like Caſes preſcribe much the ſame Medicines? And when they diſpute whether the Cauſe of Diſeaſes be in the Humours or the Veſſels, when undoubtedly it is in both; in the Fluids immediately, and then in the Veſſels by their means; Don't they ſeem to differ ſometimes about the Cauſe of a Diſtemper, for no other reaſon than that one enquires after the next Cauſe of it, and the other after that which is principal or more remote? What occaſion the Chymiſts, with their almoſt new Language, have given for theſe verbal Contentions, let the skilful in Phyſick determine. I proceed to the Philoſophers.

Philoſophy has been peſter'd with Diſputes about Words, ever ſince it began to be divided into Sects. *Cicero* mentions a Book written by *Antiochus* an Academick, to prove that the Stoicks and Peripateticks agreed in the things

De Nat. Deor. *l.*1.

things they held, but differ'd in the Manner of expreſſing themſelves. That Controverſy between the Peripateticks and Stoicks is well known; *Whether any thing beſides Virtue* (as Health, Riches, or Honour) *may be call'd Good?* and, *Whether any thing beſides Vice* (as Pain or Poverty) *be really an Evil?* The Peripateticks affirm'd it; the Stoicks deny'd it: and a Controverſy of importance, you may be ſure, they thought it! But what, did *Ariſtotle* equal Honour or Riches to Virtue? Far from it: He grants that Virtue is the chief Good which Man can enjoy; and that all other good things, however valuable, are not to be compar'd with it. On the other hand, do the Stoicks abſolutely reject and renounce Riches, *&c.* which they won't allow to be good things? No ſuch matter: Tho they are not good things, yet they are preferable to their Contrarys. Well, are theſe Contrarys, (Pain, Poverty, *&c.*) Evils, and to be avoided? That they may be avoided, the Stoicks will grant you; but Evils, it ſeems, they are not! *Cicero*, methinks, expoſes theſe Men very handſomly: "The Stoicks, ſays Tuſc. 2.
"he, conclude from their Sophiſms, that
"Pain is no Evil; as if the Diſpute were
"not of the Nature of the thing, but what
"Name to give it. Pray Maſter *Zeno*, ſays
"he, how can that which is terrible, dread-
"ful, and calamitous to me, be no Evil?
"Why, ſay you, nothing is evil, but what
"is diſhoneſt and vicious. But, I ſay, you
"trifle, and anſwer nothing to my Queſtion:
"I know as well you that Pain is not Wic-
"kedneſs; therefore don't equivocate, but
"anſwer me directly, Whether it be not for

Chap. 2. " my benefit to be out of torment? Not at " all, ſay you: for nothing but Virtue can " make a Man happy. Why then muſt we " guard againſt Pain? Becauſe, ſay you, it's " unpleaſant, againſt Nature, grievous, and " hard to be born. Agreed! The very ſame " thing which I ſay; the only difference is, " what I call by one name, *Evil*, you deſcribe " by half a ſcore." In another place he introduces *Piſo* laughing at the Stoicks for denying Riches to be good things, but calling them Preferables; when the word *Preferable* has four Syllables in it, and *Good* but one. That Controverſy too of the Stoicks, Whether all Sins be equal, is a mere Logomachy. For all that the Stoicks mean by it in reality, is, that a ſmall Offence does as truly, tho not ſo far, depart from the ſtrait Line of Righteouſneſs and Juſtice, as the greateſt Crime: which no man in his wits, I think, ever deny'd. The ſame may be ſaid of that ſeemingly monſtrous Opinion of theirs, which *Seneca* could not digeſt, *Ep.* 113. That Virtues and Vices were animated: for by *animated*, they were very far from underſtanding what we do by the word. So in that Queſtion, Whether Sound be a Body? how plain is the Logomachy! For, what wonder was it that the Stoicks ſhou'd affirm it, who defin'd Sound, *Air put into Motion?* or that others ſhou'd deny it, who with *Plato* thought it more proper to define it, *The Motion of the Air?*

Another famous Controverſy was, Whether a Wiſe Man was free from Paſſions, or did only wiſely moderate 'em? *Ariſtotle* was for the latter; *Zeno* held the former Opinion, for no other reaſon but becauſe the word

Paſſion

Paſſion is ſometimes taken for Exceſs of Anger, to which Moderation is a Contradiction. Much to this purpoſe *A. Gellius* tells us a pleaſant Story of *Plutarch*: *Plutarch*, it ſeems, had a Servant, of a ſelf-will'd, perverſe Temper, but a Pretender to ſome Acquaintance with Books and Philoſophical Diſputations; whom, for ſome Offence, his Maſter had one day order'd to be well whip'd. As ſoon as the Fellow began to feel the ſmart, he complain'd moſt heavily, ſaying he had done nothing to deſerve ſuch Treatment: but when he ſaw that this and his Outcrys brought him little relief, he betook himſelf to another courſe, and ſoberly diſputed the Point with his Maſter; telling him, it did not become him, a Philoſopher, who had written a very good Book againſt Anger, to cauſe him, his Fellow-Creature, to ſuffer ſuch cruel Effects of it. To whom *Plutarch* anſwer'd very gravely and calmly, "You think me angry "becauſe I order you to be thus corrected: "but you are miſtaken. Can you ſay that I "change Colour or Countenance? Do mine "Eyes ſparkle, or do I foam at the mouth? "Do I ſcold, or brawl, or ſay any thing un-"becoming? Theſe, whether you know it "or no, are the Signs of Anger." And then turning to the Man that whip'd him, "Pray, "ſays he, whilſt this Fellow and I diſpute, "do you mind your buſineſs, and follow "your blows." 'Twas not his Opinion, it ſeems, that a Philoſopher was without juſt Reſentments, but that he ſhou'd not let his Paſſions get above the Direction of his Reaſon. This ſame *Plutarch*, *A. Gellius* tells us ſomewhere, in impeaching *Epicurus* ſtrain'd his Chap. 2.

Chap. 2. words a peg too high. *Cicero* paſſes this general Cenſure on the Stoicks, That they differ'd more in Words than Senſe, from the other Sects of Philoſophers: "It's only a particular Set of Words, ſays he to 'em, which you have gotten different from other People, that makes you Kings, Emperors, Wealthy, Handſom, Free, good Subjects, Wiſe Men, *&c.* and all the reſt of the World Madmen, Fools, and miſerable Slaves." Their Paradoxes, he ſays, differ but in the manner of Expreſſion from the Tenets of other Philoſophers; and at laſt concludes thus of 'em: "The Stoicks, ſays he, hold the ſame things with the Peripateticks; but are more ſuperſtitiouſly tenacious of the Words by which they have been us'd to expreſs themſelves: which becauſe they can't be prevail'd with to diſuſe, they appear unpoliſh'd, harſh, and ungenteel both in their Writings and their Converſation." And of the Academicks and Peripateticks he ſays in another place: "That they agreed in Things, but differ'd in Words; and are in reality but one Sect call'd by two different Names."

De Fin. Bon. & Mal. *l.* 4.

Acad. Quæſt. *l.* 1.

What Sects of Philoſophers, wou'd one think, differ'd more than the Epicureans and Stoicks in their Notions concerning the Chief Good? Wou'd one imagine, that ſuch a Man of Pleaſure (ſuch a Beaſt ſome wou'd ſay) as *Epicurus*, ſhou'd any way agree with the moroſe, rigid, and ſevere Stoick? And yet there is no ſmall Harmony in their Sentiments. *Lactantius* ſays, That *Epicurus* plac'd the higheſt Good in the Pleaſure of the Mind, *Ariſtippus* in that of the Body; and that *Plato* held

L. 3. de falſa Sapientia.

held true Pleaſure to be the Effect of Prudence only. And *Epicurus* himſelf tells us, in his Epiſtle to *Menœceus*, (and he is quoted for it by *Cicero*, *Lib. de Fin.*) That *we can't live a pleaſant Life, if we behave not our ſelves wiſely and virtuouſly; nor wiſely and virtuouſly, if we did not live pleaſantly.* Whence it's very plain, that *Epicurus* meant no more by Pleaſure, than that Tranquillity of Mind which reſults from a ſincere and hearty Love of Virtue: beſides which, if a Man be bleſs'd with a ſound healthy Body, which is ſo generally the Effect of a temperate Life, where is the Harm of all this? And what can it be but Prejudice or Miſunderſtanding, that has made People ſo ſevere upon him? "My Opinion of *Epicu-*
"*rus*, ſays *Seneca* (and I hope we may hearken to a Stoick in this Caſe) "is, that his "Precepts are faultleſs and honeſt; nay, if "duly conſider'd, rigid and ſevere. The "Pleaſure he talks of, is by no means that "impudent Licence which ſome are pleas'd "to indulge to themſelves, but ſuch as "is accountable to and juſtifiable by Rea-"ſon; being deſign'd for the Refreſhment "and Support of Nature, not to ſatisfy the "Cravings of Luxury. So that to ſpeak the "truth, ill Men wou'd feign get a reputable "Patron for their Uncleanneſs and Beſtia-"lity, and purſue the Pleaſures without fear "or controul, not which he teaches and ad-"viſes us to, but which their own brutiſh "Appetites have dictated to 'em: and in the "mean time wou'd have us believe that they "act conformably to his Precepts. So that "I muſt confeſs, I can't with the Multitude "accuſe *Epicurus* as the Patron of a vicious

Chap. 2. " Life; but that he is ill ſpoken of undeſer-
" vedly." Beſides, methinks 'tis a moſt unreaſonable Suppoſition, that the Philoſophers ſhou'd ſo vaſtly differ, as that *Epicurus* ſhou'd reckon Pleaſure the chief Good; *Ariſtotle* a deſirable Good, but not the chief Good: *Zeno* ſhou'd think it a thing indifferent, neither Good nor Evil: That *Speuſippus* and *Critolaus* ſhou'd reckon it an Evil; and *Antiſthenes* the greateſt Evil: if they were all agreed in the meaning of the words *Pleaſure*, *Good* and *Evil*, ſo that there were no Ambiguity in them.

If we may credit *Ariſtotle*, what a vaſt difference was there between his Notions and thoſe of *Plato*; and yet *Boetius*, the great Reſtorer of the Peripatetick Philoſophy among the *Latins*, proves there was a greater Harmony between 'em, than is generally believ'd. And without diſpute, *Ariſtotle* wou'd not have been found to differ ſo much from other Philoſophers, if he had fairly given us their Meaning, and had not burnt their Writings (as *Plato* alſo wou'd have done thoſe of *Democritus*, had he not been diſſuaded from it by *Amiclas* and *Clinias*) and thereby render'd it impoſſible for us to know any thing of their Opinions but by his Miſrepreſentations. See *Plin. in Praf. ad Veſp.* *Joh. Picus Mirandula Op. tom.* 1. *p.* 83. for other Examples of Philoſophers contending about Words; where alſo it's confidently affirm'd of *Ariſtotle* and *Plato*, that there was no Queſtion in Natural or Moral Philoſophy concerning which they were not agreed, tho they differ'd in the Way and Manner of expreſſing themſelves.

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To ſearch among the School-Philoſophers for Contentions about Words, wou'd be all one as to make Enquiry for Water in the midſt of the Sea. They very rarely diſpute about any thing but Words, and therefore affect to talk in general Terms; and never deſcend to particulars, things intelligible, and worth our knowing. Is it not a Queſtion of great moment, Whether Natural Philoſophy be a Science or an Art? or, Whether there be any ſuch Diſcipline? or, Which of theſe two Queſtions ought to be firſt propos'd? Whether Phyſicks be ſubordinate to Metaphyſicks? and, Whether Phyſicks wou'd not be diſcredited by ſuch a Subordination? What is the proper, adequate, and formal Object of Phyſicks? Whether it can be defin'd? In what Predicament it is? And whether it be in any? Whether Body, *as natural*, be the Object of its Speculation? And if ſo, whether the word *As* be *reduplicative* or *ſpecificative?* There are abundance of ſuch other Queſtions not worth determining, which are as ſoon reſolv'd as underſtood. Chap. 2.

The Metaphyſicks of the Schoolmen conſiſt of little elſe than Contentions about Words. Did but the Metaphyſicians underſtand one another's barbarous Jargon, the greateſt part of their Diſputes wou'd ſoon be ſilenc'd. To give an inſtance or two: How ſtrangely were they divided about that Queſtion, whether Univerſals did exiſt *à parte Rei?* The Reals, as they call'd 'em, affirm'd it; the Nominals deny'd it: and to fighting they go, from Words to Blows; for fair Diſputing wou'd not ſerve their turn, (*Joachim Camerarius* in the Life of *Melanchthon* tells us, 'twas

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Chap. 2. ſo at *Tubingen)* and yet the Controverſy was no more than a Strife about Words. If you had ask'd thoſe who held the Affirmative of the Queſtion, whether there was in nature any Subſtance which was neither Spirit nor Body, nor this, nor that, nor any other kind of Subſtance; but ſimply Subſtance, as ſometimes we apprehend Subſtance, having our Thoughts abſtracted from any particular Species of it? No man in the World, ſure, who underſtood your Words, but wou'd diſown ſo abſurd an Opinion. And yet this is all which the Nominals deny. On the other hand, no Nominal will deny but that That which he conceives when he thinks of Subſtance, is truly in this, that, and the other Subſtance which has a real Exiſtence. And this is all that the Reals contended for.

Many Diſputations have been written concerning a *Suppoſitum:* One Queſtion, not yet decided, is, Whether the Soul ſeparated from the Body after Death be a *Suppoſitum?* No, ſays one, for it's not a ſingle compleat Subſtance. What, is it not a compleat Soul? Yes, but it's not a compleat Man, till its Reunion with the Body. Well, all this I grant. Wherein then do we differ? Why only in the Meaning of the word *Suppoſitum:* You allow that only to be ſuch, which is actually united with all the other Parts which Nature has deſign'd for its Companions: I give any ſingle Subſtance that name, tho it be not in actual Union with the Parts deſign'd for its higher Perfection. And is it worth our while to quarrel about the different Acceptation of a Word? I cou'd eaſily demonſtrate that the greateſt part of Metaphyſical Diſputations

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are like theſe I have mention'd: as thoſe about the Queſtions, Whether every Being be One, True, Good, and Perfect? What is the Principle of Individuation? Whether Relations have any real Exiſtence? *&c.* Their Diſputations in Phyſicks are nothing better. As when they diſpute whether there be any Motion towards being a Subſtance? Whether Generation be Motion? and, Whether it be inſtantaneous or ſucceſſive? (which is only to contend whether the Alterations antecedent to the Matter's receiving the compleat Form, may be call'd a Part of Generation, or no) ſo, whether the Form of the Elements remain in mixt Bodies? *&c.* Their verbal Diſtinctions in Logick ſeem to be contriv'd purpoſely to amuſe People, and to ſupply matter for everlaſting Contention. Chap. 2.

The modern Philoſophers, particularly *Des Cartes* and his Followers, endeavour to ſpeak as intelligibly as the Geometricians, and conſequently have not ſo many Contentions about Words as the Antients and Schoolmen: and yet the *Carteſian* Philoſophy has given occaſion to ſome Diſputes which are no better. For inſtance, *Des Cartes* ſays the Soul is nothing but Thought: Others thinking the Inference of this to be, that the Soul is an Accident of, and that will periſh with the Body, exclaim againſt this Doctrine as inconſiſtent with that of the Immortality of the Soul. Whereas *Des Cartes* by *Thought* means indeed a thinking Subſtance; which he calls Thought, leſt any ſhou'd imagine the Mind a Subſtance, from which its thinking Faculty was a diſtinct Thing, or a ſeparable Mode: when for ought we know, its very Eſſence may conſiſt in

Chap. 2. in actual Thought; it being certain, that when we ſeparate the Idea of Thinking from that of the Soul, we have remaining in our Minds only a general confus'd Idea of *Subſtance in general*, ſuch as we don't know to be in nature. Again, *Des Cartes* perſuades us, as a Preliminary to our Search after Truth, to doubt of every thing. This People run out againſt as Scepticiſm, Atheiſm, and I know not what: when he means no more, than that we ought to give Aſſent to nothing, but what we ſee ſupported with ſufficient Reaſon. And the beſt way to know this, is to ſuppoſe, not believe, every Propoſition falſe, that we may with the greater Attention and Accuracy conſider its Evidence; and may be able to give a more confirm'd, rational, certain and impartial Aſſent to its Truth, when we have ſeen and conſider'd the Reaſons for ſo doing. Once * more; *Des Cartes* ſays, Spirits are in *no place* and *no where*. Preſently ſome are under terrible Apprehenſions, leſt he abſolutely deny the *Being* of Spirits, and think of nothing but Sadduciſm and Atheiſm: Others think it an unavoidable Conſequence of this Opinion, that Spirits (and ſo our Soul) can have no relation to our Body. But even here, there is no ſuch Hereſy as they imagine: for *Des Cartes* ſuppoſes thoſe things only to be in *Place*, which have the ſame relation to Place as Bodys have, which fill up ſome Space, and one of which touches another: and ſince

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* *Whether our Author has given us a juſt Account, and ſufficient Vindication of* Des Cartes's *Notions in this and the other mention'd Inſtances, I leave the Reader to determine.*

Spirits

Spirits can't be ſaid to do ſo, he denies them to be in a place *properly*; or, which is the ſame thing, ſays they are no where. He ſaid, *God is here in our part of the World only by his Operations*; but meant not, with *Vorſtius*, that the Divine Eſſence is confin'd to Heaven, or any other place: for he acknowledges his Will, by which he acts or operates, to be his very Eſſence; and only denies that corporeal Extenſion which *Vorſtius* aſcribes to him. Chap. 2.

So they who deny God's being any where before the World's Creation, or that he now exiſts in any place beyond, or out of the World, think of nothing leſs than denying his Immenſity; but intend only, that in the mention'd Caſes there being no body with which the Almighty cou'd be preſent, he cou'd not properly be ſaid to be in any place.

Some diſpute whether Error be in the Underſtanding or the Will; when all agree that in the ſimple Apprehenſion or Perception there may be Obſcurity and Confuſion, but that Error properly ſo call'd can be in the Judgment only: So that the whole Controverſy lies in this, whether the Judgment properly belongs to the Underſtanding or the Will? as if they were different diſtinct things, when indeed they are really and intrinſecally the ſame.

He who denies Fire to be hot, means no more than that there is no Quality in Fire it ſelf, like the Senſation it produces in us. And he who ſays there is no Senſe except in the Brain, denies not but the Cauſe of it may be in any other Member.

But it's impoſſible for one Man (they are ſo numerous) to reckon up all the Controverſys

Chap. 2. of this kind. Mathematicks it ſelf, notwithſtanding all its care to avoid Ambiguitys, is not free from 'em. Cou'd *Clavius* and *Pelletarius* have diſputed as they did about an *Angle*, what it was, had they known, or been willing to know, one another's meaning? How vainly does Mr. *Hobbes* cavil againſt the Definitions of the Mathematicians, not conſidering that they are only *nominal*, which are arbitrary, and as the Definer pleaſes? How idle are thoſe Diſputes, whether a Point be a part of a Line? or Unity be a Number? And how apt are the Mathematicians to laugh at thoſe who expreſs themſelves in other words than what they are us'd to, tho perhaps they are altogether as proper?

I ſhall conclude this Chapter with this Remark: If they who take ſuch care to avoid verbal Contentions, can't acquit themſelves of 'em; what ſhall we think of thoſe who are ſo far from endeavouring to prevent 'em in themſelves or others, that they do what they can to promote and increaſe 'em?

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The ſeveral Kinds of Logomachys.

BY what has been ſaid, you plainly ſee how apt Learned Men are to make a great noiſe about nothing. I now proceed to ſhew the ſeveral kinds of Controverſys about Words. Now, ſometimes there's no real Difference at all between the Antagoniſts; at other times there's a ſmall Difference, but not ſo much as is pretended. Sometimes (tho not ſo often) one or both of the Combatants quite miſtake the Queſtion: but moſt times, in the heat and confuſion of Diſputation, they in many particulars depart from it. To give an Inſtance; In the Controverſy concerning the Morality of the Sabbath-Day, ſome think the dedicating the ſeventh part of our Time entirely to the immediate Service of God, is our indiſpenſible Duty, by virtue of the fourth Commandment given to the Jews: others reckon it only a prudential Inſtitution of the Church. Now here is, I confeſs, ſome difference; but then they run into ſtrange Confuſion and Inconſiſtencys about the words [*of moral Obligation*] ſometimes taking it in one ſenſe, then in another, anon in a third: and as ſoon as ever the duſt is rais'd, from diſputing they fall to quarrelling and miſrepreſenting one another; as if one Party held every tittle of the fourth Commandment, and other Precepts relating to the Jewiſh Sabbath,

to

Chap. 3. to be of perpetual Obligation to us Chriſtians; and as if the other Party were going about to aboliſh the publick Worſhip of God.

And yet theſe Men are agreed, that every thing commanded and forbidden in the fourth Commandment is not of perpetual Obligation; as, *e. g.* keeping holy the ſeventh Day, reckoning from the firſt Day of the Creation: nor a total Abſtinence from all ſorts of Labour both by Man and Beaſts; and other things of a myſtical ſignification. On the other hand, they agree that 'tis our Duty to worſhip, not only privately, but at ſet times in publick Aſſemblys, which ought to be frequent and full, and celebrated with Reverence, Attention, and Zeal: That ſince the Chriſtian Church conſecrates the Return of every ſeventh Day to the immediate Service of God, as the Jews did, we ought to ſet aſide all worldly Buſineſs on that Day, willingly and chearfully to attend on God's Worſhip; make a due Preparation for it at home, and avoid every thing likely to divert us from it: That for a capable Perſon to neglect this, is not only a Contempt of the Church, a Diſobedience to the Ordinances of Men, but a direct and immediate Affront to God himſelf; it's a robbing him of thoſe more ſolemn Acts of Worſhip, of that Tribute of Praiſe which is due to him from Chriſtians, even on more accounts than from the Jews.

In all the forementiond particulars, both Partys agree; but theſe are confounded with thoſe about which they diſagree: And hence ariſes that ſort of Contending about Words which I call *mixt Logomachy*, to diſtinguiſh it from a *mere Logomachy*, where the Queſtion is quite miſtaken.

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To give one Inſtance more: Another Queſtion hotly agitated, is, Whether the Faithful who died before our Saviour, obtain'd the Forgiveneſs of their Sins? This at firſt ſight one wou'd think a ſtrange Controverſy: For will any ſay the Faithful are gone to Hell for want of having their Sins forgiven? By no means, ſay they. Well then, are they gone to continue in Limbo till the Reſurrection? This they ridicule. Did they then ſatisfy for their Sins, by being puniſh'd for 'em in their life-time? No ſuch matter. Will they ſay, they went to Purgatory to be cleans'd from thoſe Sins for which they cou'd obtain no Remiſſion? No, they went directly to Heaven, the endleſs State of the Bleſſed. Two of 'em had the honour to be tranſlated thither alive: And all this they obtain'd, they ſay, by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, the Meſſias who was to come. Chap. 3.

Do they then differ in this, that Jeſus Chriſt, the only Sacrifice for Sin, not being actually offer'd up, their Sins cou'd not be actually aton'd for, and were therefore remember'd in the Ceremonys and Sacrifices of the Jews, and themſelves us'd more hardly under the Law than Chriſtians under the Goſpel, and had not ſo clear Manifeſtations of the Meſſias and his Benefits, as we have? No, in all theſe, and other things relating to the Difference betwixt the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Oeconomy, they are abſolutely agreed. In what then do they diſagree? Why truly, I ſhou'd ſay this is an Inſtance of (what I but now call'd) a pure Logomachy, did it not ſeem inſolent to ſuppoſe ſo many Learned Men (as there have been) engag'd in it. I ſhall therefore rather think there may be ſome

Chap. 3. difference between 'em, tho ſo minute, that ſuch dull Fellows as I can't diſcern it.

Another Diſtinction of Contentions about Words, is this: Some are about one ſingle, or but a few Words; others about a whole Syſtem, or the Manner of explaining an Hypotheſis. The former ſort is ſoon perceiv'd; *e. g.* in the Queſtion, Whether the Will can be compel'd, who is ſo ſhort-ſighted, but ſees that the difficulty is remov'd if you explain the word *compel'd?* If you mean that the Will may be forc'd to deſire a thing which at the ſame time it loaths, it's a Contradiction in terms; for a Man can't will, and not will the ſame thing at the ſame time. But if by compelling the Will, you mean no more than that the Will for fear of an approaching Evil may be contented to allow of that, which when at liberty and free from danger it wou'd by all means abhor and avoid; who is ſo ignorant, as not to know that the Will is thus compel'd every day? In ſuch Inſtances as this, the Ambiguity is eaſily diſcover'd, and conſequently the difficulty more readily remov'd. But when Writers differ about the Explication of an Hypotheſis, or Method of a Syſtem, Fallacys are not ſo ſoon detected.

An eminent Inſtance of this we have in the famous Controverſy which divided almoſt the whole Body of Philoſophers in *Europe* into two Sects, the *Ariſtotelians* and *Ramiſts*; and was almoſt the only Argument for Diſputation in all the noted Univerſitys of *France* and *Germany*. It began at *Paris* on this occaſion: *Peter Ramus* had publiſh'd two Books, in which he finds fault with *Ariſtotle*'s Method of writing in ſome particulars:

ticulars: One of theſe he intitles, *Logical Inſtitutions*; the other, *Animadverſions on* Ariſtotle. This was highly reſented by ſome of the Univerſity; who, judging if *Ariſtotle*'s Authority was once call'd in queſtion, their own cou'd not be over-ſecure, choſe *Anthony Govean* an eminent Lawyer for their Champion, began to rage and rail, and ſtuck at nothing that might ſerve to run down *Ramus*'s Noveltys (as they call'd 'em.) When they found all this wou'd not do, away they trudg puffing and blowing to Parliament, beg 'em h[illegible]all that was good to forbid the reading of t[illegible]ſe pernicious Books: Alas, *Hannibal* was at the Gates, and nothing but Death and Deſtruction at hand! Well, even this was not thought a ſufficient Remedy. Nothing would ſerve, but his moſt Chriſtian Majeſty *Francis* I. muſt be Judg in this weighty Debate; (and very well worth his while you may be ſure 'twas) he ſubmitted to it, and order'd five Perſons to hear the Point debated and determin'd according to the Merits of the Cauſe. Chap. 3.

Accordingly *Govean* choſe *Peter Daneſius* and *Francis Vicomercatenſis* for his Seconds; *Ramus*'s Friends were *J. Quintin* and *John Beaumont*: the King nominated a fifth, to repreſent his Perſon and be Arbitrator. After theſe Gentlemen had trifled away many Days, *Ramus* ſeeing three of 'em againſt him, began to diſtruſt his Cauſe, and wou'd have appeal'd from them to more equitable Judges. But theſe, having the Staff in their own hands, condemn'd *Ramus*, and made their Report to the King; who immediately approv'd their Sentence, and in a long Proclamation gave

Chap. 3. Orders, that for the future *Ramus* ſhou'd read no more Lectures, and that none ſhou'd preſume to Print, Sell, or any ways Publiſh his Books under very ſevere Penaltys. *Ariſtotle*, you'l ſay, muſt needs have the better of it, having not only the Doctors, but King and Parliament his Advocates; and therefore who, for the future, wou'd be ſo hardy as to diſpute his Authority?

But perhaps my Reader liſtens to hear the Particulars of this great Debate. Well then (but pray be attentive) *Audomarus Talæus* will inform you preſently: *Ariſtotle*, it ſeems, in his Books of Logick, had neither given us the Definition nor Diviſion of it. This Omiſſion *Govean*'s Heroes made it their firſt day's Buſineſs to juſtify; which *Ramus*'s two Friends thinking againſt all Senſe and Reaſon, gave it under their hands very judiciouſly, that we ought to know the controverted Point before we can diſpute about it to any good purpoſe: but this the others thought not fit to allow, and ſo they broke up without coming to any Concluſion.

The next Day the *Ariſtotelians*, conſcious that they had been unreaſonably ſtiff the day before, began to be a little more pliable, and condeſcended to the *Ramiſts* ſo far, as to allow that Logick ought to be divided into two Parts; the firſt of which is deſign'd to help our Invention, the ſecond to direct our Judgment.

This Conceſſion was too advantageous to the *Ramiſts*, not to be made uſe of to their Advantage; they therefore inſiſted, as a neceſſary Conſequence from the Premiſes, that *Ramus* had juſtly blam'd *Ariſtotle*, for making

ing no Diſtinction where they themſelves ac- Chap. 3.
knowledg'd a Difference. This pinch'd the
Ariſtotelians, who, in ſhort, finding nothing wou'd help them out but adjourning the Court, put off their Anſwer till another day. This the *Ramiſts* thought very hard, but what follow'd was much worſe; for when the Day came for the *Ariſtotelians* to give in their Anſwer, truly they wou'd not ſtand by what they had ſaid, but wou'd have the whole Debate begun anew, and all that had been ſaid go for nothing. *Ramus* not bearing ſuch manifeſt Injuſtice, appeals to all the World. What Proof had they brought, that his finding fault with *Ariſtotle* was an undermining the Foundations of Theology, and the other Sciences; ſuch a horrible Interruption, ſuch an unfortunate miſchievous Diſturbance of their Studys (as the Regent of the Univerſity call'd it) a Diſeaſe that muſt have a ſpeedy Remedy, or they were undone; a Plague which requir'd nothing leſs than the King's Proclamation to warn his loving Subjects from the Infection? Indeed here was no new Opinion, much leſs Hereſy, broach'd. 'Twas only a Diſpute whether *Ramus*'s or *Ariſtotle*'s Method was to be prefer'd; or rather a great noiſe about nothing, a mere Logomachy, fit for nothing but to be laugh'd at.

And what are a multitude of Logical Diſputations but Logomachys, as thoſe concerning the Number and Order of the Predicaments and Predicables, what Things or Notions do or do not belong to them? In what part of Logick we ought to treat of Topicks, Syllogiſms, Sophiſms, *&c*? Of the Neceſſity of Definitions, and whether the *Genus* may

Chap. 3. be ſometimes omitted in them? Whether Dichotomy or Trichotomy be the beſt way of dividing Things? So likewiſe thoſe, by which they ſettle the Diviſion and Subordination of the Sciences, and aſſign to every one their Objects, that each may be contented with her own ſhare: For Metaphyſicks, you muſt know, takes it very much amiſs that Logick ſhou'd invade her Province; in preſuming to diſcourſe of the Whole and its Parts, Cauſe and Effect, Subject and Adjunct, *&c.* And Pneumaticks is no leſs diſturb'd, that Metaphyſicks ſhou'd pretend, againſt all the Juſtice in the World, to invade her Right of conſidering the Nature of Spirits; and the Wrangles between Pneumaticks and Phyſicks, for the Propriety of talking about Man, are everlaſting: So that I wonder a Science call'd Anthropology does not ſtart up in the World, and to part Strife, take the Conſideration of Man to it ſelf from them both.

Seneca takes notice of this in his Eighty Ninth Epiſtle, telling us, that ſome divided Philoſophy into two Parts, others into three, others again into five, and yet without any material Difference. And indeed if every thing, worthy to be known, be treated of ſomewhere with that Brevity, Clearneſs and Order, as I can eaſily underſtand and retain it in my Memory; I matter not a farthing to what Art, Science or Diſcipline you refer the Conſideration of it, or in what particular Method you treat of it. Oh! but ſay you, I hate Confuſion and want of Method; and this Method appears to me the moſt natural in the World. Right! No body loves Confuſion; but then I wou'd rather you

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ſhou'd obſerve Method than diſpute about it, Chap. 3.
eſpecially as if it were about a Matter of Life and Death. Give us a Specimen of your Method in the next Book you write, and if it excels, no doubt but you will have Admirers and Followers enough.

But ſome Philoſophers are like Lawyers, who when they have a bad Cauſe, do what they can to prevent the Trial's coming on, by unreaſonable Scruples concerning Preliminarys and Matters of mere Form.

Beſides, how ſtarch'd and clumſy does ſuch a ſuperſtitious Affectation of a particular Method look? *Gauſſenus* was certainly in the right, when he ſaid, that in explaining the Sciences we were not tied up to one ſingle Method, but are left at liberty whether we wou'd, for inſtance, refer every Thing and Idea in Nature to the ten Categorys of *Archytas*, or to two, *viz.* Subſtance and Mode; or three if you pleaſe, Subſtance, Mode and Non-Entity; including under this laſt, external Denominations, Relations, Privations, *&c.* (and the like in Theology, *&c.*) the principal thing you aim at being to reduce all Ideas under certain Heads for the help of your Memory; the Capacity and Reach of which being as different in all Perſons as the Features of their Faces, muſt have different Helps, and thoſe too in a different manner.

Another ſort of Logomachy is when the Diſputants don't differ concerning the thing it ſelf about which they diſpute, but can't agree what name to give it: As when two Politicians know very well the Conſtitution of this or that Government, but one will have it

Chap. 3. call'd a Monarchy, or mixt Monarchy, and t'other a Commonwealth.

Sometimes it is a mere blind Logomachy, neither of them underſtanding one another nor themſelves, differing only in Words, and yet coming to no real Agreement, their Words being only Sound without Senſe. Thus *Montaign*'s Friend pretended to diſpute with a Man of no ſmall Reputation, yet never offer'd one Argument, but only a parcel of Jargon without Senſe or Coherence, ſtuff'd with Terms of Art; all which the other took for Objections againſt his Hypotheſis, and ſpent a whole day in gravely conſulting t'other's waggiſh Nonſenſe. This was done deſignedly on one hand; but ſometimes neither of the Diſputants underſtand that they talk about nothing. Thus when the Schoolmen contend ſo earneſtly about the ſtrange Nature and Power of the *Materia prima*, which is neither Body, nor Spirit, nor this, nor that, nor any other particular thing; yet every thing, and capable of producing every thing: I don't believe either Party know what they talk about; if they do, I muſt frankly own I don't. The Diſputation, I fancy, is like the *Eccho*, which heretofore, in days of Yore, as the Poets tell us, was a bonny, jolly plump Girl, but is now dwindled away into a mere Sound.

No leſs guilty are they of diſputing about Words, who talk of things above the reach of Human Underſtanding. As alſo they who will needs have it, that they underſtand their Adverſary's meaning better than he does himſelf, and faſten a Senſe or Meaning on his Words which he diſclaims and proteſts againſt.

gainſt. But more of this when we come to the Cauſes of Mens contending about Words. Chap. 4.

CHAP. IV.

The Greatneſs of the Evil of Contending about Words.

IF any yet think theſe Contentions about Words not to be of ſuch ill Conſequence as to deſerve ſo large a Reproof, and that in ſpeaking of them ſo copiouſly, I fall into the Vice I reprehend; I only deſire him to conſider the Effects of them: and then, I fancy, he'll ſoon agree with me, that tho the miſunderſtanding this or that particular Word or Phraſe be no great matter, yet the Schiſms they create in the Church; the Factions, Tumults and Seditions they breed in the State; the Damage and Diſgrace they bring on Religion and Learning; the Heats they occaſion in the Pulpit, the Wranglings at the Bar; the Party-making in the Senate; the Bigotry in Schools, Colleges and Univerſitys, which conſtantly attend them, are no ſmall matters.

To theſe we owe the different Sects of Philoſophers, and the ſeveral Denominations of Chriſtians; who have many times been ſo exaſperated againſt one another, as if they wou'd have turn'd the World upſide down about Letters and Syllables. Councils of Biſhops call'd together from all Quarters, even

Chap. 4. even the remoteſt Parts of the Empire; yea Princes, Kings, nay prudent as well as potent Emperors, have not been able to allay the unmanly, unchriſtian Heats of Churchmen; but one Party wou'd ſtill charge the other with Impiety, Hereſy, Atheiſm, horrible Blaſphemy, and what not! and then very charitably damn one another to the Pit of Hell: And all this for nothing in the world, but becauſe they miſunderſtood one another's meaning, as we have already ſeen in many Inſtances.

'Tis yet further remarkable, that the more trifling and minute theſe Controverſys are, with the greater Feud and Animoſity they are generally carry'd on. To inſtance in our own unhappy Diviſions (for they are too notorious to be conceal'd or excus'd:) How many are there amongſt us, who have often offer'd the Right Hand of Fellowſhip to their Brethren, and have endeavour'd to behave themſelves towards them with that Temper and Moderation which Chriſtians ought to have for one another; who have met with no other Returns from many of them, than to be rejected with Abhorrence and Scorn; to be repreſented as more intolerable even than thoſe, whoſe bloody Principles (Religious I dare not name them) will not permit them, by their good will, to diſpute with any milder Arguments than Sword, Fire and Faggot: and to have their Opinions (how harmleſs ſoever) miſrepreſented, and revil'd as worſe than the other inſupportable Yoke of human Traditions; than their ſaucy Domination over Kings, Emperors, Princes, and all the reſt of Mankind; and (to ſum up all

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in one) than their tyrannical, barbarous and bloody Inquiſition. Chap. 4.

This is, I ſay, the Treatment they meet with from Gentlemen, who ſpeak much more favourably of reuniting themſelves with thoſe whoſe Doctrines their Fathers abhor'd as Antichriſtian, whoſe Worſhip they abominated as Idolatrous, whoſe Diſcipline they condemn'd as the Torment and Snare of truly conſcientious Perſons; than they do of giving any other Quarter to their Fellow-Proteſtants than what they can meet with under Cenſures, Excommunications, Anathemas, Impriſonment, Loſs of Goods, *&c.* And pray, what may be the occaſion of this uncharitable, ſpiteful, unmanly Treatment of our Brethren? Why, truly, not the leaſt Diſagreement in any one fundamental Article of our Holy Religion; but (as any one may ſee who has Eyes, and will be ſo kind to himſelf as to make uſe of them) ſome few ſmall Differences about things indifferent, or (at moſt) unneceſſary. I don't ſay all our Controverſys are merely verbal: No; we really differ in our Sentiments concerning ſome Matters, I readily acknowledg. But then I boldly affirm, that moſt of our Quarrels ariſe from mere Logomachys, and not from real Differences; and that if the former of theſe were once remov'd, if we underſtood one another more perfectly, there might, for any thing I know to the contrary, remain ſome real Controverſys amongſt us; but thoſe ſo few and trivial, as wou'd be more apt to be forgotten than to be brought upon the Stage, in order to worry Peace and Charity out of the World. But perhaps ſuch

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Chap. 4. Golden Times are reſerv'd for future Ages; wiſe, learned, and good Men have in vain attempted to introduce them in this.

Never were Controverſys manag'd with obſtinate *Jews*, impure and ſenſual *Mahometans*, blaſpheming Libertines and Atheiſts, or profane Scoffers at all Religion, with greater Heat and Quarrelling, than ſome of the Diſputes above-mention'd were in ſeveral Univerſitys; particularly in thoſe of *Holland*, to the no ſmall Joy and Triumph of their Enemys, who ſcoff'd at them, and made uſe of their Writings for Common-Places of Reproach, whence they gather'd choice Flowers of *Billingſgate* Rhetorick. 'Tis a common Obſervation, that when Friends and Neighbours fall out, they are oftentimes more implacable than Strangers and profeſs'd Enemys: Juſt ſo we much more patiently bear to be contradicted by thoſe, whoſe Sentiments differ from ours as far as Eaſt does from Weſt, than by thoſe who differ from us only in a few inſignificant Matters, or perhaps in nothing but the manner of expreſſing themſelves. A notable Inſtance of this we have in an Author (who calls himſelf *Ludovicus Montaltius*) the moſt elegant Writer of the Provincial Letters. When *Janſenius*'s Tenets were canvaſs'd in the Univerſity of *Paris*, two Queſtions were particularly very hotly debated; the firſt was, *Whether the Righteous have in themſelves an immediate Power of fulfilling the Law?* The other was, *Whether all Men receive of God Grace ſufficient for their Converſion?* The *Jeſuits* affirm'd both, and the *Janſeniſts* deny'd them. A third Party appear'd, whom they call'd at that time the modern

modern *Thomiſts*; theſe talk'd as the *Jeſuits* did, tho their Opinions were the ſame with thoſe of the *Janſeniſts*. They ſaid with the *Jeſuits*, that the Juſtify'd had an *immediate Power* of fulfilling the Law; but then added, that this Power cou'd not be reduc'd into *Act*, but by the *ſpecial* Grace of God: which was juſt the ſame which the *Janſeniſts* meant, by ſaying, they had not an immediate Power. Chap. 4.

Again, theſe *Thomiſts* affirm'd with the *Jeſuits*, that all Men have Grace ſufficient to convert them; but held with the *Janſeniſts*, that this *ſufficient* Grace wou'd never become *effectual*, unleſs accompany'd with *ſpecial* Grace, which was the very Reaſon why the *Janſeniſts* wou'd not call it *ſufficient*. Were not the *Thomiſts* then of the *Janſeniſts* Opinion? No, by no means, but join'd with the *Jeſuits*, notwithſtanding the real Diſagreement of their Sentiments, and perſecuted the poor *Janſeniſts* for not ſpeaking, as well as thinking, juſt as they did.

To ſee more of the Nature of theſe Contentions, 'twill not be amiſs to conſider what the Great Apoſtle St. *Paul* ſays of both of them, and the Perſon who promotes them: *He is proud*, ſays he, *knowing nothing, but doting about Queſtions and Striſes of Words, whereof cometh Envy, Strife, Railings, evil Surmiſings, perverſe Diſputings of Men of corrupt Minds, and deſtitute of the Truth, ſuppoſing that Gain is Godlineſs; from ſuch withdraw thy ſelf.* 1 Tim. 6. 4, 5.

In the firſt place, as ſoon as the Man withdraws his Aſſent from, or denies it to *ſound Words* (as the Apoſtle calls Truth in the foregoing Verſe) he's ſeiz'd with a Spirit of

Chap. 4. Contradiction; and this diſpoſes him to diſpute, not ſo much for Truth, as for Victory, or (which with him is all one) for the laſt Word; and if he can but confound, or even tire his Adverſary, with a multitude of Words, be they ever ſo impertinent, he thinks himſelf a brave Fellow. And if once he imagines himſelf to have come off with flying Colours, he diſputes with every Man he meets at all Adventures: Nothing ſhall then be ſo certain but what he'll queſtion; nothing ſo clear, but he'll endeavour to perplex; wrangling with Friends and Foes, Conſenters and Diſſenters: He'll diſpute eternally, not only concerning things of moment, but the moſt trifling things in nature, and oftner about Words than Things. If he can't meet with an Adverſary, he'll create one, and make People ſpeak what they never meant, rather than miſs an occaſion of ſhewing his Parts in their Confutation. If he meets with his Match, or finds any applauded more than himſelf, or one who has gotten the knack of Diſputing (which he reckons the End and Perfection of Learning) then nothing can be more uneaſy: You can't imagine how his little narrow Soul boils with Envy. *Pompey* cou'd have born an Equal, and *Cæſar* a Superior with much more Patience. He ſummons together all his Forces, lays about him with Might and Main, and therefore pray let every one look to himſelf.

And one word unwarily expreſs'd, or miſunderſtood, creating another, he never ceaſes till his Adverſary, quite tir'd with his Impertinence, lays down the Cudgels.

Beſides,

Beſides, ſuch are the moſt unfair Adverſa- Chap. 4.
rys imaginable. The bittereſt Invectives and Curſes of the Poets; the fouleſt Language in the Comedians us'd towards Slaves, Whores, Pimps and Paraſites; theſe good-natur'd Gentlemen will not ſpare to apply to their Opponents. If this be not ſufficient then, one is a *Sadducee*, and t'other a *Phariſee*; this a *Pelagian*, that a *Manichee*; you a *Sabellian*, you a *Photinian*; thou a *Neſtorian*, and thou an *Eutychian*; and ſo proceed, like ſome good-natur'd Women, from Arguing to Scolding, to the end of the Chapter. The Queſtion, we'll ſuppoſe, is about a Point of Philoſophy: But the Buſineſs is to inveigh againſt one another's Manners, and inſtead of debating a Point of Doctrine, to reflect upon one another's Familys. The genuine ſignification of the Word is this, ſays one, I'll maintain it. Oh, but ſays t'other, you're a *Dutchman*, or a *Scotchman*. I am very able to prove that this is the beſt Method for a Philoſophical Treatiſe, ſays the Opponent. Ay, ſays the Reſpondent, but I am miſinform'd if you have not had more than one Baſtard. The Senſe of ſuch a Paſſage in Scripture is this, ſays one: But pray, replys t'other, who was it that beat the poor Woman till ſhe miſcarry'd? Now I'll appeal to all Mankind, whether this be not profound Reaſoning?—— *Epiphanius* and St. *Chryſoſtom* (Men well known) had different Opinions about the Writings of *Origen*: Well, ſays *Epiphanius* to *Chryſoſtom*, I hope you may never die a Biſhop: And, ſays St. *Chryſoſtom*, I pray God you may never ſet foot in your Country again. Was not this very much to the purpoſe, think

Chap. 4. you? They were hearty Prayers, perhaps, but, in my Opinion, poor wretched Arguments. In ſuch Wranglings as theſe there's Heat enough, I confeſs; but the Miſchief is, it's without Light. The Diſputants are, like Children in the Dark, afraid of every thing they meet. They can't read a Page in a ſuſpected Author, without finding ſome dangerous Error in it; if 'tis not clearly expreſs'd, then he'll have it that the Snake lies in the Graſs. And in Books, whoſe Authors he don't admire, there's hardly a Word but this acute Man can eſpy ſome very dangerous Opinion deſign'd to be advanc'd by it, or ſome antient Hereſy reviv'd. Tell ſuch People, as plainly as you can ſpeak, that every thing that's good and praiſe-worthy in us is to be aſcrib'd to the Grace of God; that notwithſtanding this you incourage the Study and Practice of Virtue and Piety as much as any: That you are as far as any from believing, that all things come to paſs by Neceſſity or Fate: That you abhor all Opinions which infer God's being the Author of Sin: That you utterly deteſt the Doctrine which teaches, that God has decreed to eternal Perdition a great part of Mankind, without reſpect to any foreſeen Sin, but merely of his Almighty Power and abſolute Sovereignty; becauſe it pleas'd him ſo to do. Tell them this a thouſand times over, and call God and Man to witneſs your Innocency, and that you don't ſee, but abſolutely diſown any Impiety or Hereſy to be the Conſequence of your Opinion, the more you talk, the leſs you'll be believ'd. Speak kindly to them; offer to drop the Controverſy, and be reconcil'd to them:

them: Oh, they'll tell you, don't pretend to put your Tricks upon Travellers, we know you too well to be wheedl'd. Chap. 4.

It's certain, the Nature of Man is of it ſelf too unhappily diſpos'd to theſe ſorts of Wrangling: but, as tho they were not, we have our Schools (or Peſthouſes I may call them) to teach and promote them. The Schoolmen, as *Ludovicus Vives* obſerves, teach their Scholars to ſcold before they can well ſpeak; Diſputing is the Beginning, Middle, and End of all their Studys. Hence it comes to paſs, that Univerſitys and Academys are turn'd into Fencing-Schools; where the Youth, inſtead of applying themſelves to the Study of Learning and Piety, are egg'd on to quarrel and diſpute about Trifles: Trifles indeed in themſelves, but ſuch as produce more fatal Effects than are commonly taken notice of, or can eaſily be imagin'd. For Wranglings about them, occaſion very often not only the Loſs of Truth, but deſtroy the very Love of it; as People in ſome Diſtempers who hate their Food and Phyſick, but can digeſt Traſh very heartily. Beſides, many of theſe Diſputants make their Markets of theſe Controverſys. For as long as there are Men in the World, who believe him the ableſt Divine who has the ſtrongeſt Lungs, and take a mighty Zeal for a Party, and ſpecious Pretences to Religion, for Religion it ſelf; there will not be wanting Men of bad Principles and baſe Spirits, who will value Learning no farther than it ſerves to fill their Purſes and humour their Pride, by ſupplying them with Riches and popular Applauſe.

Chap. 4. One wou'd think enough had been ſaid to convince us of the Malignity and Contagion of this Diſtemper, which is ſo Epidemical in the learned World. It's owing to this that young Gentlemen, who ſhou'd bring with them from the Univerſity, Learning, Gravity and Piety into the Church; good Senſe, Knowledg and Prudence into the Senate; Equity into the Courts of Juſtice; Concord into their Familys; Piety towards their Country, and Parents; Love to their Neighbours; Faithfulneſs to their Friends; Civility and Friendlineſs to their Countrymen; Forgiveneſs and Patience towards their Enemys, *&c.* do bring home hardly any thing elſe than a perpetual Itch of Diſputing where there's no Difference; a Spirit of Contradiction; the Art of finding Hereſy in the leaſt Error, or even ill-expreſs'd Word. Their Common-Place-Books are ſtuff'd with Forms and Methods of Calumny; their Hearts full of Anger, Hatred, and Irreconcilableneſs; and their Heads with Suſpicions, and narrow, low, ill-digeſted Notions; having foul Mouths, ſlandering Tongues, threatning Looks, and ſharp Pens: I mean ſharp to wound their Neighbours Reputation; on other Subjects they are as dull as you can wiſh them. In the Reign of the School-Divines things were brought to that paſs, that Divinity, Philoſophy, all the Sciences were in a manner compos'd of eternal Janglings and fruitleſs Logomachys, which ſet almoſt the whole World in a Flame. No wonder then if the Apoſtle adviſes us by all means to avoid and withdraw from ſuch, as Inchanters and Poiſoners, who neglect the calm

calm and ſedate ſearch after Truth; and inſtead of indoctrinating the Minds of their young Pupils with ſolid Learning and true Piety, do, for ſelfiſh baſe Ends, tincture and ſeaſon their tender Minds with what the Apoſtle ſo accurately deſcribes to us, and ſo vehemently warns us againſt. But to proceed: Chap. 4.

Were theſe Contentions about Words not miſchievous in themſelves, but merely Trifles; it deſerves to be conſider'd, what important, yea what neceſſary things we let paſs without Conſideration, whilſt we amuſe our ſelves with theſe. Theology points out to us the Way of Salvation, teaching us, that it's our indiſpenſable Duty to make continual Advances in the Knowledg of God and of our ſelves, in Learning and Wiſdom; and in Faith, Hope, and Love. And, ſhall we who have ſo great a Work to do, like Children who are capable of nothing elſe, ſquander away the few precious remaining Moments of our Lives, in toying and ſquabbling about Letters and Syllables? 'Tis high time, Gentlemen, to begin the Study of true, ſolid, and ſubſtantial Wiſdom: Delays are dangerous. Enough of Life has been ſpent in wrangling and diſputing. Let's at length begin to live in earneſt. Death is at hand: and how much better will it then be for us to be found doing ſomething, than prating about nothing? I have read a Story, which may be thought to our purpoſe: A certain Criminal was told of a Well in an unfrequented Place, where he might hide himſelf very ſafely from his Purſuers, till ſuch time as proper Methods

Chap. 4. cou'd be found for his further Security. The Fellow goes very orderly; but perceiving the Well in a very decay'd Condition, runs back to his Friends, and very angrily complains, they had abus'd him; that inſtead of a Well, there were nothing but the Ruins and dry Walls of a Well. What then? ſaid they; We ſent you thither not to quench your Thirſt, but to hide your Carcaſe, for which deſign 'tis a very proper Place, as you muſt needs know, if you have been there. Still the Fellow wou'd have it, that it had been a Well, but now was none; and therefore they did not well to miſinform him. His Friends told him, if he were or were not miſinform'd, they were certain he was miſemploy'd in ſpending that Time in diſputing and quarrelling, which he ought to uſe in thinking after means for his Preſervation. But the Man, ſtill perſiſting in his Folly, was by and by apprehended, and *Jack Ketch* put an end to the Controverſy.——Enough is ſaid for the intelligent Reader, tho perhaps nothing be enough for the Contentious.

If nothing but Wars and Fighting will ſerve our Turn, Enemys are not wanting who will find us Work enough, and with whom it's our Duty, and will be our Glory to contend. Let's bend our Forces againſt that implacable Enemy of Mankind, who makes it his Buſineſs to incenſe us againſt one another. Let's labour to conquer our ſelves, ſubdue our Affections, mortify our Corruptions, which are continually enticing, ſeducing and tranſporting us, in contempt of Charity, againſt our Brethren; making Mole-hills Mountains;

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ſmall Faults great ones; and inſignificant Errors pernicious Hereſys. Let's enter the Liſts with the ſecret Underminers and profeſs'd Enemys of Chriſtianity: With thoſe who deny the Incarnation of our Bleſſed Lord: With thoſe who wou'd fetter Mens Conſciences, and propagate their Principles with Fire and Sword; juſtifying their horrid Maſſacres, and glorying in their bloody Cruſadoes. When we are encompaſs'd with ſo many Enemys, ſurrounded with ſo many Dangers, have an opportunity in our hands of gaining immortal Victorys to our everlaſting Triumph in Glory; *When* Babylon *as yet is not deſtroy'd:* we agree in nothing but to diſagree, and to worry one another with Noiſe and Nonſenſe about Words and Trifles. Chap. 4.

Many wiſe and learned Men have made ſad Complaints, that ſo many Attempts have been made in vain to bring the Sciences to ſome Perfection. Some have charg'd this Miſhap on the Length and Difficulty of the Sciences, and the Shortneſs of Human Life; and with *Theophraſtus* impeach Nature, for giving long Life to Crows and Jack-Daws who need it not, and an Inch of Life to Men who have ſo much Buſineſs to do in it: Who if they had longer Time here, would be in a Capacity of perfecting the Sciences, and of ſtoring and adorning their Minds with all ſorts of valuable Learning and Knowledg. But, perhaps, with a great deal more Reaſon we may lay the Blame upon thoſe ſordid, abject, paltry Cares, which enervate and diſtract our Minds; and on thoſe many Thoughts we laviſh Cic. l. 3. Tuſc. Quæſt.

Chap. 4. away about the unneceſſary vain Contentions which have been the Subject of our Diſcourſe. Let us hear what *Seneca* ſays of this matter: "The Reaſon that Men do ſo little conſider the things which principally concern 'em, is becauſe their Time is taken up with Trifles. *Didymus* the Grammarian wrote Four thouſand Books: I ſhould think it an intolerable Penalty for a Man to be oblig'd to read them over. In them he inquires, which was *Homer*'s Country? Who was *Æneas*'s real Mother? Whether *Anacreon* was chiefly inclin'd to Wine or Women? Whether *Sappho* was a common Woman? and many other ſuch things, worth no man's remembring. Our Misfortune is, we complain of the ſhortneſs of Life, and at the ſame time forget or neglect, at leaſt, to be thrifty of it. Conſider how much Time is loſt in the Infirmitys and Anxietys of Sickneſs; in the Hurry of Buſineſs, and in Sleep: and you will find that the Age of Man is not of Capacity to take in all which we call the Liberal Sciences. But then, of how many things do the Philoſophers treat, which ſerve at the beſt to no other purpoſe in the World, than to amuſe us? They have contented themſelves to talk about Letters and Syllables; to trifle with the Grammarians and Mathematicians, making even the moſt inſignificant of their Speculations part of their Studys." Epiſt. 88.

So far *Seneca*. But what wou'd our Stoick have ſaid, had he liv'd in the Days of the Schoolmen! when to be a Philoſopher was only to be able to diſpute; and to diſpute was

was nothing but to wrangle about Words, and many times about Words which neither Adverſary underſtood. Their Pupils were not ſo much inſtructed to oppoſe Truth to Error, as Words to Words; if I may be allow'd to call their barbarous Jargon by that Name. No wonder they made ſo little Progreſs in uſeful Knowledg! No wonder that Philoſophy was ſaid to lie at the bottom of a deep Well! That Phyſicks was ſo hardly brought to change her old unintelligible Cant of occult Qualitys, its eight I know not what Degrees, *&c.* for rational Concluſions drawn from accurate judicious Obſervations, and certain Experiments. In which method, if we proceed with Cheerfulneſs and Diligence, there's no Reaſon to deſpair, but natural Philoſophy may yet conſiderably enlarge the Bounds of her Empire. But, if we had rather ſtop at the Porch, than enter into the Palace, the Great Lord *Verulam*'s Words may not be improper for our Conſideration: " I don't deny, ſays that wiſe Man, but the " commonly receiv'd Philoſophy may ſtill be " of uſe to ſharpen our Wits, by furniſhing " us with Materials for Diſputation; to ſet " off a Diſcourſe, may be convenient for Pro- " feſſors, and yield us ſome conſiderable Ad- " vantages in our civil Capacity. But then, " we muſt know that this ſort of Learning, " which we had from the *Greeks*, is but as the " Childhood of Knowledg; and has one very " remarkable Quality of Children, it talks " much, but can perform little. It's very apt- " ly repreſented by the Fable of *Scylla*, who " has a Virgin's Face and Countenance; but her

Chap. 4.

Org. Scient. in Præf.

Chap. 4. " Womb and lower Parts are encompaſs'd " and fill'd with barking Monſters. Thus " the Sciences, in our Days, at firſt ſight " appear beautiful and pleaſing; and indeed, " in the general, contain many ſpecious " Maxims: But, if you deſcend to Particu- " lars, if you look into its inmoſt Parts and " Receſſes, you will find 'em barren, able to " breed, bring forth and cheriſh nothing, " but ſnarling Diſputes inſtead of ſubſtantial " Knowledg."

I remember a certain Divine told me, that when in his Youth he began to apply himſelf to the Study of Philoſophy; their Cuſtom was, when they went home, to write down what their Tutors had dictated to 'em in the Schools. His Father ſeeing him at his Buſineſs one day, takes up his Paper, and finds it to contain certain Logical Prolegomena, tedious enough on every Article, but particularly ſo on the Queſtion concerning the *Genus* of Logick, whether it be an Art or a Science? The old Gentleman, ſeeing to how little purpoſe his Son was employ'd, falls into a Paſſion: Away, ſays he with theſe Impertinencys! Go you and learn your Logick, and never trouble your Head, Whether it be an Art or a Science. The ſame may be ſaid to the majority of Students, who waſte not their Childhood only, but their whole Lives in vain Diſputes: Go you rather and learn the natural Cauſes of things, that wrangle about the Genus and Definition of Nature! Go you rather and learn to practiſe the Virtue of Liberality, than multiply words in diſputing, whether Liberality may not have place in

in receiving as well as parting with Mony. The ſame may be ſaid as to a thouſand other things. Chap. 4.

There was heretofore a Controverſy between the Stoicks and other Philoſophers (pray forbear laughing) Whether ſince Wiſdom was allow'd to be a good thing, [*To be wiſe*] were ſo alſo? The Stoicks contended for the former, but wou'd by no means allow that 'twas a good thing *to be wiſe*; or, if you pleaſe, that *to be wiſe* was a good thing. For what reaſon, pray! Why you ſhall have that too, if you are acute enough to apprehend it. To be wiſe, ſay they, is incorporeal and a mere Accident, and therefore can effect nothing; conſequently can profit nothing, and therefore can't be a good thing: For that which is a good thing, profits; and that which profits, acts; but that which acts, is a Body. *(By Body they meant the ſame as we do by Subſtance.)* Now, wou'd not any who were not ſo ſubtil, nor ſo nice Diſtinguiſhers as the Stoicks, think with the ignorant Vulgar, that to be wiſe was as great a Bleſſing, as to have Wiſdom; and that to live happily was as deſirable a thing, as a happy Life? *Seneca* himſelf cou'd not chuſe but take notice of this Logomachy: "Pray, Epiſt. 117.
"Gentlemen, ſays he, What's the reaſon we
"employ our Thoughts (ſo neceſſary for the
"conſideration of greater things, and ſo juſtly
"expected for the contemplation of better
"things) on thoſe matters which are either,
"at leaſt probably falſe, or ridiculouſly foo-
"liſh? What am I the wiſer, to know
"whether theſe words [Wiſdom] and [to
"be

Chap. 4. " be wiſe] cauſe in ſome Peoples Heads two
" different Ideas? or that the former may
" be call'd a good thing, but not the latter?
" Well, for once I'll take Courage, and put
" it to the venture: You ſhall have Wiſdom;
" and I'll be contented to be wiſe———
" I beſeech you now tell me, Who has the
" Advantage?———In earneſt, rather than
" trifle at this rate, point me out the Way
" by which I may arrive at Wiſdom, or
" become a wiſe Man. Tell me what I am
" to chuſe, what to refuſe? This is Wiſdom,
" this is to be wiſe: But to ſpend your Time
" in Subtilty and Sophiſtry, I'm ſure, is far
" otherwiſe. Fortune has given you ſo many
" important Queſtions to reſolve, that one
" wou'd think you ſhou'd have little time
" and leſs Inclination to quibble! How ſot-
" tiſh is it, when the Signal of Battle is given,
" to imagine, that flouriſhing your Sword
" will gain you the Victory! No, take my
" Word for it, nothing but deciſive Arms
" and fighting in earneſt will ſerve your
" Turn."

Another Miſchief of theſe Diſputes is, that when People ſee very few Queſtions, but what are debated *pro* and *con*; they are tempted to reckon all things doubtful and uncertain: or, that if there be any Certainty, it lies in Arithmetick and Geometry. For, ſay they, if there be any Certainty in the other Sciences, Why have Men ſo vaſtly different and numerous Opinions? Why does the ſame thing appear to one learned Profeſſor *true*, to another *falſe*; to this *evident*, to the other *doubtful* and *obſcure*?

To

To theſe Diſputes were undoubtedly owing the different Sects of the *Academicks*, *Scepticks* or *Seekers*, who withheld their Aſſent from all Propoſitions, under pretence of the Intricacy, Perplexity and Incomprehenſibility of Things: and it's too probable, that our modern *Libertines*, *Deiſts*, and *Atheiſts* took occaſion, from the ſcandalous Contentions of Chriſtians about many things, to disbelieve all. Concerning the former, ſays *Seneca*, "'Tis ſad to conſider, how many "Miſchiefs Subtilty has introduc'd amongſt "Mankind, and what an Enemy it is to "Truth. *Protagoras* ſays, we may diſpute "*pro* and *con* on any Subject, with equal "Advantage; even on the Queſtion, Whe-"ther we may do ſo, or no? *Nauſiphanes* "tells us, that all things in Nature do as "really not exiſt, as exiſt. *Parmenides* af-"firms, that there is but * one Being in the "Univerſe. *Zeno* of *Elea* tells us, there is "nothing in the World: and much of the "ſame mind were the *Scepticks*, *Megarians*, "and *Eretreans*, the Followers of *Menedemus*, "and the *Academicks* who taught us the "ſtrange new Science of Knowing No-"thing." Chap. 4. Epiſt. 88. * *As* Lipſius *reads it.*

They are miſtaken indeed, who from the variety of Diſputes conclude, that there is no Certainty: for, if you narrowly examine 'em, you will not find ſuch a vaſt difference between the Partys, as perhaps you imagin'd. But let the Difference be ever ſo great, 'tis a thouſand to one but they agree in many more things than thoſe in which they diſagree. You will find that the reaſon why

Chap. 4. why in the Mathematicks, the Diſputes are not ſo numerous as in the other Sciences, is not, that the Principles of the Mathematicks are more certain in themſelves, or that nothing in the other Sciences were capable of Demonſtration; but that the Mathematicians, having a Language peculiar to themſelves, expreſs themſelves in words of a more determin'd Senſe, and in whoſe Signification they are better agreed, than in thoſe us'd by the Vulgar: moſt of whom have more Meanings than they have Letters, in one of which they are us'd by this Author, in another by a ſecond, and in both by a third; whence neceſſarily proceed Equivocation, Miſunderſtanding and Confuſion.

Certainly nothing expoſes learned Men to Contempt more than theſe Wranglings; nay ſometimes Religion it ſelf, when made the Subject of theſe Diſputes, ſuffers into the bargain. *John de Secubia* a *Spaniard* drew up his Treatiſe of undeclin'd Words, he tells us, for the Uſe of the Council of *Baſil*; principally to determine the Signification of the Particles *From*, *By*, and *But*, or *Except*, which occaſion'd ſo many Diſputes between the *Greeks*, and the *Huſſites*, and *Bohemians*: The former of theſe, in my Opinion, were very juſtly laugh'd at by the *Turkiſh* Emperor, when they petition'd for leave to go to the Council, where they had no other Buſineſs but to diſpute, *Whether the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, or from the Father by the Son?* The *Barbarian* thought it incredible, that Men in their Wits ſhou'd make

make ſo much ado about that which appear'd to him of ſo little moment. Chap. 4.

Never were thoſe *Roman* Gladiators, who fought on Horſeback blindfold, more heartily laugh'd at, for their ridiculous Traverſings, and many inſignificant Blows given the Air inſtead of their Adverſary; as our blind Diſputers, eſpecially when expos'd, as they have ſo often been, in our modern Comedys.

Boccalini, the witty *Italian*, tells us a comical Story of a tragical Buſineſs acted in *Parnaſſus*. The Grammarians, it ſeems, cou'd not agree, whether *Conſumptum* were to be written with a *p* or without one: Well, from diſputing they went to fighting; and what does *Manutius* but hurls a great Stone, with a *Roman* Inſcription on it, in which *Conſumptum* was written with a *p*, full in the Face of *Lambinus*, and beat his Noſe flat. I need not apply the Fable. *Advices from* Parnaſſus, *Engliſh Edit. in Fol. p.* 97.

And who can forbear laughing to ſee the Philoſopher in the Comedy! (for why mayn't I quote a *French*, as well as a *Greek* or *Latin* Poet?) Wou'd one think a Man cou'd be ſo angry as he is there repreſented! How does he revile his Adverſary? How does he enlarge upon his Ignorance, as tho he had never learnt his *a*, *b*, *c*? He reckons him amongſt the worſt of Fools, Buzzards, Blockheads, Idiots, Changelings; and won't give him leave to ſpeak one word in his own Defence. Ask him what Deviliſh Hereſy, Helliſh Blaſphemy it is, which he thus condemns, abhors, abominates? or, what ſacred Truth it is which he maintains, with ſo much Zeal? Moliere's *Marriage-Force*, Act 1. Scen. 4.

He

Chap. 4. He can't tell you preſently, by reaſon of the diſorder he is in; but, have patience till the Man comes to himſelf, and you ſhall hear that it's about no ſuch Trifle as perhaps you may imagine, but concerning the very important Queſtion, Whether it be moſt proper to ſay the *Faſhion* or the *Shape* of a Hat? Diſcourſe this Man in matters relating to the Conduct of Human Life, he's as far to ſeek as the greateſt Idiot in nature: But ask him, whether Being be a *Genus Univocum* with reſpect to Subſtance and Accident? Whether Logick be an Art or a Science? Whether its Object be the three Operations of the Mind, or only the third? Whether there be ten Categorys, or only one? Whether the Concluſion be of the Eſſence of a Syllogiſm? Whether the End influences us by its real or intentional Eſſence? Whether the Eſſence of Good conſiſts in its Deſirableneſs or Agreeableneſs? Whether Good and the final End be reciprocal? On ſuch Subjects as theſe he'l talk till Doomſday: Only you muſt be ſure to humour him, and let him in every thing have his own way, and proceed in his own method.

When the Vulgar ſee ſuch Pedants as theſe brought upon the Stage under the name and notion of Learned Men, Doctors and Philoſophers; they even pleaſe themſelves in their own Ignorance, and preſently entertain the moſt contemptible Thoughts in the world of the Liberal Sciences and all ſorts of Learning. They take a Scholar and a Fool to be two words differing only in Sound; and look upon Schools not as places well-provided for the Cure

Cure of Ignorance, but ſet up for the Bane of good Senſe, and the Deſtruction of Wit; where Boys of good parts degenerate into Pedants, and Pedants into downright Fools. Chap. 4.

I don't deny but this Saucineſs and Buffoonery of Satyriſts and Comedians ought to be diſcountenanc'd and ſuppreſs'd: but I wou'd willingly know, whether they who give them the occaſion of uſing their Pens to no better purpoſe, ought to be free from Cenſure. But the Poets are not the only Men who have had a fling at our Diſputers; old grave Philoſophers have expreſs'd their Diſlike of 'em with freedom enough: "We diſ-
"pute, ſays *Seneca*, with abundance of Gra-
"vity, about the moſt ridiculous Queſtions
"in nature; inſtead of which, inſtruct me,
"I beſeech you, how I may attain to the
"Perfection of Virtue. I don't deſire to
"know whether Fortitude be a living Crea-
"ture: but put me in mind as often as you
"pleaſe, and convince me by all the Argu-
"ments you can think of, that no Creature
"living can be happy without it, who is not
"proof againſt all ill Accidents, and is not
"prepar'd for the worſt of Events."

And yet, after all, I muſt needs ſay that the Vulgar have not ſo much reaſon to ſlight and inſult the Learned Part of Mankind, as if wrangling about Words were confin'd within the Walls of the Schools and Univerſitys. Look abroad into the world, and you'll find no place free from it. I ſhall not inſtance in ſome little, pitiful, pedantick *Grecian* Republick: nor in King *Demetrius*, who promis'd three hundred and ſixty Buſhels of Corn to one who

Chap. 4. who told him of a Barbariſm which had accidentally ſlipt from him in an Oration, in which he acquainted the People with his Liberality to the *Athenians*. Nor do I inſiſt upon critical *Athens*, which, in a time of Famine, wou'd not accept the Aſſiſtance of a Stranger who offer'd to ſupply them with all Neceſſarys, becauſe in his Letter he had made uſe of a Word, which being nicely examin'd, was ſuppos'd not to be genuine *Greek*. I rather chuſe to take old *Rome* for an Example, the Miſtreſs of the World; ſo glorious for warlike Exploits and Heroick Actions, that one wou'd reaſonably ſuppoſe they ſhou'd have been a People the moſt free of any in the world from trifling about Words. Yet it's very evident, that mere Words had a ſtrange Influence over 'em. The Pride and Tyranny of *Tarquin* made 'em hate more the *Name* of a King, and the *Name* of *Tarquin*, than either the Perſon or Thing. The Letters and Syllables of which thoſe Words conſiſted, were odious to the *Romans*. Theſe drove *Tarquin Collatine*, the Aſſertor of their Libertys, and Expeller of their King, from the Conſular Dignity into Baniſhment. Theſe extorted that Oath from the *Romans*, That *for the future they wou'd never endure any Mortal to be their King*. They ſhou'd have ſaid, *They wou'd never again permit any to be call'd their King*. For Domination and Sovereignty went down with 'em very well, as long as it was call'd by another Name. The Conſuls, whoſe Government was ſo very acceptable to 'em, wanted nothing of the Authority, Dignity, and Power of Kings; only they

they were choſen every Year. The Dictator cou'd not indeed continue in his Office longer than ſix months; but then as long as he enjoy'd it, no King in the world cou'd ever be more abſolute than he. Did they not bear with the *Decemviri*, tho, all other Offices ceaſing, they had an unlimited Regal Authority? And what was *Sylla*'s and *Caſar*'s perpetual Dictatorſhips? Again, Were not the *Triumviri* to all intents and purpoſes Kings, who ſhar'd the World between 'em? But this is not all, they ſubmitted to Monarchy under *Octavius*; on condition indeed that he ſhou'd not call himſelf *King*, but *Prince*. Slavery, that bittereſt of all Pills, wou'd go down with 'em well enough, ſo 'twas but gilded over with the Name of Liberty. They ſuffer'd their Senate to loſe all their Authority, being ſatisfy'd well enough that there were ſome who were honour'd with the *Name* of Senators. They endur'd the Arbitrary Tyrannical Government of the *Tribunes*; but 'twas under the notion of their being Patriots, tho they were nothing leſs. In a word, they put their Necks under the feet not only of Kings, but of Tyrants and Monſters; whilſt refuſing the Title of Kings, they were content with that of Prince, or *Imperator* or Emperor. And had (not *Caligula* or *Nero*, but) even thoſe excellent Princes *Auguſtus* or *Titus* uſurp'd that Title, they had arm'd all the World againſt 'em; had been in the utmoſt danger of loſing Life and Empire both together, and of being render'd odious to the lateſt Poſterity: as was *M. Manlius Capitolinus*, who being condemn'd for Chap. 4

 endeavouring

Chap. 4. deavouring to play *Rex*, was thrown off from the *Tarpeian* Rock; and to ſhew they were not Enemys to his Perſon only, they paſs'd a Law, That none of his Family ſhou'd ever after be call'd by his Name. So famous were the *Romans* for their Wars, not only with potent Kings and flouriſhing States, but even with Letters and Syllables!

You'll be miſtaken, if you think the Rabble and meaner Sort of People only were thus ſuperſtitious concerning Words and Expreſſions; the Senators and Nobility were no leſs. There was a Debate between the *Patricians* and *Plebeians*, about the latter's being made capable of enjoying the Conſular Dignity; which when the former ſaw they cou'd not handſomly deny, they ſubmitted, if the latter wou'd be ſatisfy'd with the Power without the Name, and be call'd, not Conſuls, but *Tribuni Militum Conſulari Poteſtate*, Colonels or Tribunes veſted with Conſular Dignity.

The Prieſts alſo were as weak in this particular as the People. To give an inſtance: Before the Expulſion of the *Tarquins*, ſome holy Rites were perform'd by their Kings, after whoſe Abdication they thought it neceſſary that he who ſolemniz'd thoſe Myſterys ſhou'd have the ſame Title: but to prevent all Miſchief which might ariſe, not from the Exceſs of this Sacerdotal King's Power (for he had none in Civil Affairs) but from his Name, leſt that, like a Spell, might raiſe the Devil amongſt 'em; they made him inferiour to the *Pontifex Maximus*, or High-Prieſt, and by that means kept his Name under the hatches, ſo that it cou'd not be prejudicial to the Peoples Libertys.

A mighty pother too they made to prevent the hearing any unlucky Noiſe at the ſolemnizing of their Religious Rites: Hence thoſe Expreſſions, *Attend with Silence*; *Have a care what you ſay:* Hence their playing with Pipes, leſt any Noiſe ſhou'd be heard, which might profane the Myſterys of their Religion. Was not here a mighty Concern about Words? Chap. 4.

Thus when they were to encounter their Enemys, they took care that the Soldiers ſhou'd be arm'd not only with Weapons, but Words and certain Names. We are inform'd by *Livy* and others, that when the Conſuls call'd over the Names of the Citizens, ſitting before the General's Pavilion, or in the *Forum*, they were ſcrupulouſly careful that the firſt employ'd in the Service ſhou'd have a lucky Name, as *Valerius*, *Salvius*, or *Statorius*. Says *Thraſo*, in the Comedy, to *Sanga*; *What, you Scoundrel! do you bring a Sponge to fight with an Enemy?* So, didn't the *Romans* deſerve Rebuke, for imagining the Enemy were to be beaten with Words as well as with Swords?

And are matters mended in our days? Some, when they repeat the Lord's Prayer, will put the Pronoun *Our* after *Father* (becauſe 'tis ſo plac'd in *Greek* and *Latin)* contrary to the Uſe of the *European* living Languages. What is Superſtition, if this be not?

And what did that Nation get by the bargain, who growing weary of their King, exchang'd him for a Tyrant (more cunning indeed, but not a whit more honeſt, but much more mercileſs and arbitrary) who pleas'd 'em with the ſpecious Name of *Protector!*

Chap. 4. How many are there, who wou'd rather be without an Advantage (be it Riches, Learning, or any other Good) than without the Reputation of poſſeſſing it! And many bear Poverty with a great deal of patience, who wou'd be very angry ſhou'd you call 'em poor Fellows. Many ſubmit to the moſt abject Services, ſo they be ſet off with a pretty *French* Name, or in a Nobleman's Family. Baniſhment had been much eaſier to *Ovid*, had he not been inſulted with the Name of Exile. And ſome wou'd endure the moſt racking Pain, rather than it ſhou'd be ſaid they had this or the other Diſtemper, whoſe Name they don't care to hear mention'd.

That endleſs Struggle for Titles of Honour and a great Name, what is it but a Contention about Words? The great Ambition of the generality of Mankind, is, not really to be Learned, Wiſe, Prudent, Pious Perſons; but to be ſo eſteem'd. Oh! 'tis a brave thing to be taken notice of, tho it be only by Porters and Carmen. And I'll aſſure you, in my opinion *Demoſthenes* was not a little oblig'd to that poor ſilly Woman, who wou'd point at him as he walk'd the ſtreets, crying, *That's he*; *There goes the famous* Demoſthenes. Strange! that ſuch a buſineſs cou'd make ſuch a Man vain and proud! But ſo it is; Men are more ſtudious to ſecure to themſelves a Name with their Contemporarys and with Poſterity, than a truly ſubſtantially bleſſed and glorious Immortality. Nay, ſome have attain'd to the Madneſs of *Eroſtratus*; they care not whether they be famous or infamous, if their Names, that is, the Syllables by which they

they are diſtinguiſh'd from other People, be in every body's mouth. Chap. 4.

The continual pains People take to acquire Riches, that Idol of Mankind, is really not for the Thing, but the Name; not for Riches is ſelf, but the Name of a Rich Man. For what elſe an old Miſer gets with all his hidden Treaſures, I can't imagine.

But 'tis deplorable, that not only private Follys and Misfortunes, but publick Miſchiefs ariſe from verbal Contentions. How many Wars have there been about Words! What elſe are the Titles of Princes? But not to inſiſt upon that, what Rivers of Blood have been ſpilt, how many flouriſhing Citys laid level with the ground, how many fruitful Countrys ſpoil'd and depopulated, for no other reaſon than to procure one vain, raſh, inconſiderate Man the Title of *Great*, *Bold*, or *Victorious!* that his Name may be known to Poſterity, and be talk'd of in future Ages, no great matter whether with Reſpect or Deteſtation. 'Tis enough if he can ſay with the Poet, ——*All of me ſhall not die, nor to the Grave deſcend.*——But, pray, Great Sir, with profound Submiſſion, if I may be ſo bold, what is it of you that ſhall not die, but be tranſmitted to Poſterity? Why poſſibly the Letters with which his Name is ſpelt, written in a flattering Hiſtory, or on a Marble Tombſtone: nothing in the world beſides. 'Tis well theſe Warriors have ſuch knocking Arguments to defend their Practice; otherwiſe I might perhaps venture to ſay, that the Cauſes of many the moſt bloody and barbarous Wars have been as trifling altogether as the

Chap. 4. petty ridiculous Wranglings of Pedants and Grammaticaſters. But with theſe Men of War, feweſt words are beſt.

We ſee then that the Schools are not the only Places infected with this fooliſh and pernicious Humour of contending about Words. 'Twou'd be well for the world, if People of Condition wou'd be earneſt after its Cure. But here's the miſchief; in this, as in moſt other Infirmitys, we can't diſcern our own Weakneſs and Defects. We are ſoon ſenſible of the Sickneſs of the Body, but not of the Mind. The reaſon is, there is more Vice and Folly in the latter than we are willing to acknowledg. Go to one of theſe Contenders about Words, and inculcate ever ſo much that common Saying, *We ſhou'd not differ about Words, when we are agreed in the Senſe of 'em*; and confirm it by ever ſo many Authoritys, and you wou'd to as good purpoſe talk to a Stone-Wall. Talk to 'em kindly; *Neighbours, perhaps ſome one Word or other miſunderſtood, may occaſion all this Difference betwixt you:* They'll preſently think you to be a proud conceited *Blockhead*, or a ſtupid *Ignoramus*; if they happen to be ſo civil as not to tell you ſo. *And are you indeed ſo acute a Man*, will they ſay, *and we and all our wiſe and learned Predeceſſors ſuch Cavillers, who diſputed of theſe matters for many Ages with ſo much Zeal! Are all our Polemical Writings, which have gain'd us ſuch a Reputation, to be ſlighted, under the Notion of our being all this while engag'd with our own Shadows?* Now this naturally obliges the Reconciler in a new Diſpute, to prove the former Diſputation a mere Logomachy; which inſtead

inſtead of reconciling them, makes himſelf odious to both: eſpecially if it be in a Religious Controverſy; for then the Diſputants juſtify their want of Humanity, by pretending to contend for the Honour of the Deity. What my Lord *Verulam* ſays truly, That *the greateſt Bane and Ruin of the Underſtanding, is a Veneration for uſeleſs Notions, and the Conſecration of Errors*; may be juſtly apply'd to the Conſecration of Logomachys: They never do us more miſchief, than when they are pretended to be written for the Honour of God, and Service of our Country. Chap. 4.

In this caſe they who ſee more clearly than their Neighbours, and are ſo well aſſur'd and confident as to own it; generally undergo the Fate of thoſe *Grecian* Philoſophers, who for their nearer Approaches to the Knowledg of the Deity, for rejecting the Multiplicity of Gods, and the abſurd Superſtitions of the Vulgar, were branded as Atheiſtical and Profane. So they who dare to diſcover the Logomachys of our hot-headed Diſputants, are hated by both contending Partys; by one revil'd as cunning Shifters, Impoſtors, Deceivers, Corrupters and Betrayers of Youth; by the other repreſented as Perſons of no Zeal, lukewarm and indifferent, as Shufflers, Traitors, Turncoats, Deſerters, Falſe Brethren, or Enemys to the Church, Miſcreants, Atheiſts, Villains, and what not?

Thus are Men of Moderation and Temper treated with all the Inſolence and Baſeneſs imaginable: and they are the only conſcientious Perſons, and zealous for the Church, who agree with their Adverſarys in nothing,

Chap. 4. but damn all their Opinions, right or wrong, as monſtrous Hereſys, or at leaſt leading to Schiſm or groſs Impiety; deteſt all Toleration, Moderation, Comprehenſion, mutual Forbearance and Charity, as an Agreement of Chriſt with *Belial*, and a Confederacy with the Powers of Darkneſs. Theſe things are pleaſing to the People, who find it much more agreeable to hear a Preacher miſrepreſent and abuſe Perſons of another Sect or Opinion, than to point or ſtrike at their own Vices. He who can but luſtily ſlander and revile People of a different Perſuaſion, ſhall with his Followers be an Orthodox Man, I'll warrant him; and tho he has not one Vertue nor good Quality in him, no man with his ſchiſmatical Adherents (for ſuch they are, let 'em be of what Party they will) ſhall be more countenanc'd, encourag'd, and applauded.

The Increaſe of theſe Logomachys is often owing to Endeavours to prevent 'em. For many, when they are brought to ſee that there's little or no difference between their admir'd Authors and their Adverſarys, rather than the former ſhou'd lie under the Imputation of contending merely about Words, will fix quite another ſtrange Senſe upon their words, than the Authors themſelves ever intended or thought of.

Epicurus affirm'd our chief and higheſt Good to conſiſt in Pleaſure. What he meant by this Aſſertion, we can't better underſtand than by his own very words, as they are reported by *Diogenes Laertius*, Lib. 10. "It's a "plain caſe, ſays he, that when we make "Plea-

" Pleaſure to be the great eſſential Ingredient Chap. 4.
" of a happy Life, we do not underſtand the
" Pleaſures of the Luxurious and Leud; nor
" indeed any Pleaſures, conſider'd only as
" terminated in the Gratification and Satiſ-
" faction of the Senſes, as ſome ignorant ill-
" affected Cavillers miſunderſtand and miſ-
" interpret our Meaning. But by the Plea-
" ſure wherein we conclude a happy Life
" conſiſts, we mean no other than that of a
" healthy Body, and an undiſturb'd Mind:
" ſince neither the greateſt Delicacys nor dain-
" ty Diſhes, neither the richeſt Wines nor
" the moſt beautiful and charming Women—
" can make your Lives pleaſant; no, no-
" thing but a rational Enjoyment of your
" ſelves in Sobriety, Temperance, and a hap-
" py Freedom from troublous Paſſions."

Now what great Impiety is there in this? Yet has *Epicurus* been treated as one undeſerving the Name of a Philoſopher: and the very word *Pleaſure* has been generally taken in an ill ſenſe for his ſake. People who govern their Opinions merely on the Report of others, have all along believ'd that *Epicurus*, tho a wiſe Man in many reſpects, plac'd the greateſt Happineſs of human Life in a continu'd Round of Senſuality, Luxury, and Leudneſs. This Syſtem of Beſtiality, ſome, who found it ſutable to their vicious Inclinations, have maintain'd; fondly believing themſelves ſhelter'd and patroniz'd by the Example and Authority of ſo great a Philoſopher. Hence *Horace*'s *Swine out of* Epicurus's *Sty*; and the Names of *Doting Doctors of mad Philoſophy*; *the laudable Inventors and*

Encou-

Chap. 4. *Encouragers of Brutiſh Pleaſures*, and the like. Hence alſo ſprang the infamous Sect of the *Epicureans*; who, I confeſs, don't differ in Words only, but indeed as far as Eaſt from Weſt, not only from other Philoſophers, but from *Epicurus* himſelf, than whom none were more temperate and modeſt *.

Many grievous Controverſys often ariſe from one unapt or incongruous Word or Expreſſion. This ſhall be preſently taken notice of by the Antagoniſt, and wreſted to the worſt Senſe poſſible, you may aſſure your ſelf: and then, no doubt, the Inferences will be very heinous. Now, what does the other in this caſe? Truly he's aſham'd to own the Impropriety of his Expreſſion; therefore it muſt be defended right or wrong: till from improper ſpeaking, he runs into falſe Doctrine; and rather than be thought to have utter'd indefenſible Words, will maintain unjuſtifiable Opinions, of which before perhaps he never had one thought. For many are ſo croſs-grain'd, that they hate to have the ſame Sentiments in common with their Antagoniſts; whom they look upon not as Opponents, but Enemys. So that when in Judgment they are found to agree very well, in Affection they will differ everlaſtingly. Tho I muſt needs ſay, it ſhall be very hard but they will find out ſomething or other in

* *If any are willing to have a more exact Character of* Epicurus *and his Doctrine, in a little room; let 'em conſult the Learned* Gataker's Prælocutium *to* M. Antoninus *the Emperor.*

their

their Adverſarys Tenets to find fault with, notwithſtanding it ſhou'd happen, that by ſo doing they contradict not only the reſt of Mankind, but even their own formerly avow'd and darling Sentiments. Thus do Controverſys increaſe from Nothing to Something, from Appearances to Realitys, and from Trifles to Nuſances both in Church and State. Chap. 4.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the Cauſes of Contending about Words, which are owing to the Languages.

OUR Obſervations hitherto of the Frequency and miſchievous Nature of *Contending about Words*, have, I hope, been no leſs ſatisfactory, than they were obvious and eaſy. The Conſideration of its Cauſes, ſeems a more difficult Task. Here we ſhall have occaſion for our Philoſophy; not ſo much of turning over Books, as of conſidering Men, and of prying and ſearching diligently into the inmoſt and hidden Receſſes of their Minds. So that if in any reſpect we fall ſhort in our Enquirys, we more eaſily hope for the Reader's Candor.

All the Cauſes of *Contending about Words* may, I think, be reduc'd to two Heads: The Fault is either in the *Languages* us'd by the Diſputants, or in the *Diſputants* themſelves. Of which in their Order.

¶ If there be any Diſagreement between ſeparate Spirits, it's real, not apparent and ſeeming only; a Difference in Opinion and Senſe, and not in Words or Sounds. The reaſon is, they don't communicate their Thoughts to one another by Words, but either by the ſole Motions of their Wills, or ſome other ſecret way of Thinking to us unknown. But the Souls of Men, in our preſent State, have no

immediate Converſe or Correſpondence with one another, but communicate their Thoughts by the intervention and mediation of the Body; eſpecially by means of Sounds form'd by different Motions of the Air in the Mouth: Which Signs being in a great meaſure arbitrary, are conſequently obſcure, fallacious and uncertain. So that we often almoſt neceſſarily contend, not becauſe we have different Sentiments from one another, but becauſe we can't clearly expreſs 'em to one another. Chap. 5.

There's no Language but what has many Words, each of which ſignifies divers things: (the ſame is neceſſarily to be underſtood of Sentences and intire Diſcourſes.) Whence it happens that we often underſtand the Words of thoſe with whom we diſpute, in a different, ſometimes in a contrary Senſe from what they intended. To diſſent from another, is to think otherwiſe of the ſame thing than he does. Now, when the ſame Word is made to ſignify different Ideas, it comes to paſs that we ſeem to diſagree in our Judgments about one particular thing, when in reality we only have different Thoughts concerning different things ſignify'd by the ſame Name.

Some there are who approve, yea commend the Exerciſe of Dancing; others deteſt and abominate it. What's the reaſon of this Difference? Why, they are not talking of the ſame thing. One by Dancing means immodeſt wanton Geſtures of the Body, tending to corrupt and debauch young Perſons, as being Incentives to Leudneſs: The other underſtands by it a hardy Exerciſe of Body, deſign'd

Chap. 5. deſign'd to promote its Agility, Health and Vigour. What wonder is it if in this Caſe Perſons diſagree?

The Ambiguity of Words is very obvious: What an inexhauſted Fountain of verbal Contentions they are, is not ſo eaſy to conceive; equivocal Words and dubious Expreſſions being without number, and beyond comprehenſion. The *Hebrews* make the ſame word to ſignify not only different, but contrary things. Look but into Lexicons, Concordances, and Indexes of Books, and you'll ſoon find that almoſt all Forms of ſpeaking, Nouns, Verbs, yea Particles of Speech, ſignify differently, in divers Authors perhaps: Yes, in the very ſame, and in the ſame Page. Of theſe the moſt remarkable are taken notice of by every attentive Reader; but the more ſmall, ſubtile and minute are overlook'd, or diſregarded. So that I can't ſee that *Chryſippus* the Stoick talk'd much without Book, when he ſaid, there was no Word but what was ambiguous, and had a doubtful uncertain meaning. *Diodorus Cronus* indeed oppoſes him, and ſays no Word is ambiguous: But his Reaſons for it are the mereſt trifling about Words you can meet with, as you may ſee if you conſult *A. Gellius, Noct. Attica, lib.* 11. *cap.* 12. *Chryſippus* publiſh'd his Opinion in his Books of *Ambiguitys*, mention'd by *Diogenes Laertius, lib.* 7. which will not look ſo much like a Paradox to thoſe who obſerve what an almoſt infinite multitude of Conceptions or Ideas there are in mens Minds, and how *comparatively* few words we have to expreſs them by. We muſt note farther, that in order to

a Word's not being equivocally us'd by one or divers Authors, it's not ſufficient that it take in one, or many, or the greateſt part of the Branches of the Idea for which it ſtands, but it muſt comprehend all. If the minuteſt Tittle be added to, or taken from its Signification, 'twill create a Difference in the Idea; whence will unavoidably follow a Diverſity of Judgment. To give an Inſtance: By a Tree, I mean a Body exiſting by it ſelf, extended, living and growing by a due reception of Nutriment; conſiſting of a Root, Trunk, Branches, Boughs and Leaves. Now, if any takes from this Idea the Conception of Leaves, or adds to it that of Fruit, tho in all other matters he agree with me; yet we may talk from *June* to *January* before we intirely agree concerning the Propertys of this Object of our Thoughts. Chap. 5.

Another thing to be conſider'd is, That Words came to be made uſe of by Men as Signs of their Ideas; not *naturally*, but by *voluntary Impoſition and tacit Conſent*; and was rather the Effect of Chance, than of Counſel and Deſign: So that there's no natural Connexion between certain articulate Sounds, and the Ideas which they repreſent and ſignify. Now it's incredible that all, who uſe the ſame Language, ſhou'd ſo exactly agree in the ſignification of theſe arbitrary Signs, as to have the very ſame Idea always repreſented in its full Latitude, without Increaſe, Diminution or Alteration, by the ſame word. It's rather to be admir'd that we agree in the ſignification of ſo many Words as we do; eſpecially conſidering that we can't ſo much

as

Chap. 5. as teſtify our Agreement without the uſe of Words, which are alſo of an uncertain ſignification.

Another Inconvenience is, that we many times know better what we underſtand by this or the other Word, than we are able in Words clearly to expreſs. This often happens even to the moſt Eloquent, eſpecially when they are ſpeaking of the numerous, and almoſt imperceptible variety of our Thoughts, and univerſally of thoſe things which we don't ſo much diſtinguiſh by a clear Idea, as by Senſe, and the immediate Apprehenſion and Conſciouſneſs of our Minds. I very well know, for inſtance, what it is to have a clear Idea of this or that; and clearly perceive and am conſcious of the Light and Inſtruction my Mind receives from ſuch an Idea. But when I come to deſcribe this Operation or Condition (or what you pleaſe to call it) of the Mind to another, I muſt confeſs I am at a loſs. I am very conſcious too when my Mind *wills* this or that deſirable Good; but what it is *to will*, I cannot ſo readily explain. I find my ſelf very differently affected when I taſte any thing that's ſweet, from what I am when I eat that which is ſour or bitter. I confound not their Ideas in my Mind; but to deſcribe their Difference in Words, I cannot find ſo eaſy a Task. The ſame may be ſaid of a beautiful Face; the Regularity, Proportion and Symmetry of Buildings; the Comelineſs of Geſture, the Gracefulneſs of Speech and Action, the exquiſite Curioſity of Pictures, the Antiquity of Writings and antient Monuments, the Diverſity of Sounds, the

the melodious Harmony of Muſick, Vocal and Inſtrumental, and the difference of Stile. Many have a true and very accurate Judgment in theſe Matters, who yet can hardly render an intelligible Reaſon to another why they judg thus, and not otherwiſe. The Reaſon is, they don't form a Judgment by any ſet Rules, Principles or Maxims; but by an inward Feeling and Perception of their Minds. This makes us differently affected at the ſight of a beautiful Damſel, and a homely Dowdy; of a Gentleman, and a Clown; with the hearing of Harmony and Diſcord, and with the reading of *Cicero*'s Epiſtles and *Plancus*'s. So I have ſeen Antiquarys very nicely diſtinguiſh true Medals and antient Coins, from thoſe which were counterfeit, who cou'd preſcribe no Rules for doing this either for themſelves or others. They have a certain Taſte or Reliſh of Antiquity acquir'd by Uſe and Cuſtom, by means of which they are always differently affected, they can't eaſily tell you how, at the ſight of a truly antient Coin, and one that's not ſo, but ſuppoſititious or modern. Chap. 5.

Hence it is, that when we read the antient Rhetoricians and Orators, we don't always fully comprehend their Meaning. *Cicero* diſtinguiſhes the vehement and earneſt Stile of *Demoſthenes*, from the ſweet, gentle, and flowing manner of ſpeaking, in which *Theophraſtus*, and *Demetrius Phalareus* excell'd. Now he who has not the ſame nice Taſte as *Cicero* had, may read his Words without being much the wiſer. The ſame may be ſaid, when ſpeaking of the Action of an Orator,

Chap. 5. he repreſents it as *admirable, full of Spirit and Vigour, full of Truth, and without Affectation, full of Grief:* As alſo when the Author of the Books to *Herennius*, diſtinguiſhes Orations into the *Magnificent*, *Middling*, and *Mean*; or when *Longinus* diſputes of the *Sublime*, and *Hermogenes* of his Ideas.

All Words, denoting our Senſations of Impreſſions from outward Objects, are very equivocal and ambiguous: One, for inſtance, ſays Honey is ſweet; the other denys it, and ſays it's bitter. Here is now a real Diſagreement, if by *Sweet* and *Bitter* they both mean alike. Yet who knows but the ſame Object may in two Perſons cauſe different Senſations? The word *Sweet* is ambiguous: Every one underſtands by it that which is grateful and pleaſant to his own Palate. State the Controverſy aright, and reduce it to theſe two Propoſitions: The Taſte of Honey is grateful to *Peter*, the Taſte of Honey is unpleaſant to *Paul*; and the Controverſy will be at an end, and ſo wou'd many more: there being multitudes in which there is no greater Oppoſition than in this, which notwithſtanding have been carry'd on with much Bitterneſs and Animoſity.

We ſaid above, that even eloquent Perſons were *ſometimes* at a loſs to deliver their Thoughts in clear and proper Expreſſions; the Vulgar are ſo almoſt always. There's no body ſo ignorant, as not to know a Globe from a Cylinder, or other Figure; but ask a Plowman to tell you what a Globe is, and you'll make him ſtare upon you. He knows it when he ſees it, but can't define it; and

yet

yet by ſuch Men as theſe, and not by Philoſophers, were our Languages invented: No wonder then there was ſo little Accuracy obſerv'd in adjuſting the ſignification of particular Words. Chap. 5.

But, beſides thoſe Words which ſignify ſometimes one thing, and ſometimes another, there are others which are made to comprehend in their ſignification things of a different, yea oftentimes of an oppoſite nature, every time they are made uſe of. To give a few Inſtances out of many: By the word *Senſe* are ſignify'd to us things of as different a nature as may be. We underſtand by it vulgarly and generally both the Parts and Motions of the Body, and the Facultys and Thoughts of the Soul; and confound theſe in our Thoughts, as if there were no difference between them, and they were the very ſelf-ſame thing.

The ſame may be ſaid of the various kinds of Senſations, Affections, active and paſſive Qualitys, as they are call'd. The names of all, or the greateſt part of them, ſtand for as contrary Ideas as thoſe of Body and Spirit. The word *Spirit* is of this number. Theſe properly ſignify *Wind* or a *Breath*, but are now generally us'd to ſignify to us a thinking Subſtance; becauſe, no doubt, they thought more ſubtle thin Matter, ſuch as *Air*, to be more a-kin to a thinking Subſtance than Matter, which is more thick, groſs, dull and lumpiſh. Thus we confound the Idea of a thinking Subſtance with a Blaſt of Air, or Fire of ſome ſuch material Subſtance; which being, as we apprehend, the Matter diſpers'd

Chap. 5. thro the whole Body, at the ſame time underſtands and wills, ſeparates the Excrements from the Food, prepares the Blood, and diffuſes it throughout all the Members of the Body; warms the Heart, moves the Lungs, cauſes the Pulſe of the Arterys, the Motion of all the Limbs and Members of the Body, and what not?

Figurative Words and Expreſſions are ſeldom us'd by Diſputants, without occaſioning verbal Contentions. If you deny Brutes to have Senſe, ſome People wou'd immediately take it for granted, that you deprive them not only of all Thought, but of all the Motions and Affections of Body, and the Uſe of their Members; in a word, of every thing which they comprehend in their inconſiſtent, ſelf-repugnant Notion of Senſe. If ſuch will fight with ſhadows, who can help it?

I remember heretofore I was guilty of this trifling about Words in the following Inſtance. I judg'd the End, or Bounds, or Limits of a Body to be a mere Negation, and not the Exiſtence of the extreme or outermoſt Extenſion of a Body. Notwithſtanding the contrary Sentiments of many eminent Philoſophers, I, like the reſt of the World, was very ſtiff in my Opinion, believing nothing to be more evident. At length, upon cooler Thoughts, I found 'twas a mere Logomachy.

The word *End* was us'd by my Antagoniſts in a more large and comprehenſive ſenſe than 'twas by me; I meant no more by it than the Extremity of the Parts of a Body: They, beſides this, meant the extreme Parts themſelves,

themſelves, at leaſt the outward Surface. Others added to this the Figure made by the different Poſition and Situation of the Parts; ſo that, in their Senſe, the End of a Body is more than a mere Negation: I grant, in mine it's ſo, and no more. Chap. 5.

To this purpoſe ſpeaks the excellent Lord *Bacon*: "Things, *ſays he*, having their "Names given them by the Vulgar, are re- "preſented to us, and diſtinguiſh'd from "one another by thoſe Names, according to "their Conceptions and Apprehenſions; ſo "that when a more accurate Underſtand- "ing, or more diligent Obſervation, brings "Things into a clearer Light, without "great Caution, Words will interpoſe and "obſcure them, and give us a great deal of "Trouble in our Enquirys after the Truth. "In this caſe Definitions, conſiſting like- "wiſe of Words, don't do us all the Kind- "neſs we might reaſonably deſire. And tho "indeed we may think we are Maſters of our "Words, and 'tis eaſy to ſay we ought to "ſpeak with the Vulgar, and think with "the Wiſe; yet ſtill the Deluſions and Leger- "demain of Words will ſeduce and miſlead us: "They will incumber and intangle the Under- "ſtanding; and (unleſs we be very careful) "retort upon it thoſe Prejudices and falſe "Notions, which at firſt were imprinted on "it by their means." De Augm. Scient. l. 5. c. 4.

To proceed; verbal Contentions are not caus'd only by one Word's ſignifying many things, but by many Words being us'd to ſignify the ſame thing, or by the ſame things being call'd by different Names. People may

Chap. 5. have a different way of expreſſing themſelves, who have the ſame Sentiments and Opinions; different Words having many times the ſame ſignification. Tho we want a multitude of Words to expreſs all our Ideas, we have yet many Words to expreſs the ſame Idea. Nor is this ſtrange, if we conſider, that a Nation is compos'd of Citys, theſe of Familys, every one of which don't fail to bring the Words and Expreſſions, peculiar to themſelves before their Confederacy and Union, into the Language common to them all. This muſt needs create Variety, which is increas'd alſo by Travel, Commerce, by Chance, and the Love of Novelty, and the irkſom Tedioufneſs of repeating the ſame Words every time we are upon the ſame Subject. Beſides, there's no Artificer, nor Tradeſman, but what has Words peculiar to their Craft and Profeſſion; not always of Neceſſity, but Vanity: like our Huntſmen, who value themſelves at no ſmall rate, when they have once attain'd to that noble Accompliſhment of theirs, the ingenious Art of ſpeaking *Dog-Language*.

So that there is no City, nay ſcarce a Country Town, Village, or indeed Family, which has not Words or Phraſes peculiar to themſelves. And every one takes a liberty, when one Word does not preſently occur, to uſe another of the ſame ſignification. Eminent Perſons are imitated in their particular manner of expreſſing themſelves, eſpecially Princes and Great Men. Hence ſprings the vaſt Difference betwixt the Language of the Court and Country; the great

Choice

Choice and Changes of Words, the reviving thoſe which have been for a long time obſolete, the diſuſing the modern, and the coining of new ones. Hence neceſſarily ariſes Plenty of ſynonymous Expreſſions, which Orators, Rhetoricians and Poets have done what they can to increaſe; ſo that having a multitude of Words of the ſame ſignification, they may beautify their Stile with variety of Expreſſions, and not tire their Auditors, by always leading them in the ſame dull Road. Chap. 5.

With thoſe Words which are of the ſame ſignification, we often confound thoſe which are not. The Antients, *Lipſius* tells us, diſtinguiſh'd *Caſſis* from *Galea*; the former ſignifying an Helmet made of a Plate of Iron, or ſome ſuch Metal; the latter of the Hide of a Beaſt: So *Clypeus* ſignify'd a round Buckler, *Scutum* an oblong one. But how often did both the Antients and Moderns uſe theſe Words exactly in the ſame ſignification, tho they had diſtinct Notions of the Things ſignify'd by thoſe Words? Logicians indeed diſtinguiſh betwixt *Science*, *Opinion*, and *Faith*; but the Vulgar, many of them, uſe theſe Words in the ſame ſenſe. *Agellius* tells us, that *Præda* ſignifies the Things or Goods themſelves taken from the Enemy; and that by *Manubiæ*, we are to underſtand the Mony for which they were ſold. But *Nonius* tells us another Story, and *Aſconius* explains the Words differently from them both; and ſome made no manner of diſtinction between them, but us'd them exactly in the ſame ſenſe, as *Agellius* himſelf confeſſes. Sometimes Men

Chap. 5. don't ſtand nicely to diſtinguiſh, what at other times they do. *Cicero* was too thorowly acquainted with all the Subtletys of the Stoicks and Peripateticks, not to know the difference between a *Definition* and a *Diviſion*: Yet *Cœlius Calcagninus*, by a ſmall Miſrepreſentation of his Words, has had the confidence to reproach him on this account, in his 2d Diſſ. on *Lib.* 1. *Officiorum Cic.*

The Truth of the Matter is, when two Words ſignify things of a nature, tho not the very ſame, yet very much akin or alike; the minute and trivial Differences in their ſignification, tho known well enough and obſerv'd in their Minds, are not always taken notice of in the Books of Writers, very remarkable for Purity, Exactneſs and Accuracy.

The Philoſophers (comprehending under that name Divines, Lawyers and Phyſicians) having endeavour'd to redreſs the Grievances we labour under by reaſon of theſe Defects in the Languages, have introduc'd a mighty Change and Alteration into them: For when they obſerv'd more to be contain'd in the adequate Idea of thoſe things, which were the Objects of their Contemplation, than the Vulgar heeded, or ever took the leaſt notice of; and diſtinguiſh'd many things, which were confounded in the Minds of the common People, to whom we ordinarily owe the Languages; they were compel'd to coin many new Words, to alter the ſignification of thoſe which were ready made to their hands, made ſome to ſignify in a more inlarg'd, others in a more narrow confin'd Senſe than they

they did before; determin'd the Senſe of ſome, and diſtinguiſh'd others. So that the Language of the Learned, and that of the common People became very different; that of the former being hardly intelligible to the latter: and this was another occaſion of many Contentions about Words. Many are reprehended as diſputing againſt the Principles of a Science, for no other Reaſon than becauſe he is not thorowly inſtructed in the Language and Terms of Art us'd by its Profeſſors. Chap. 5.

It's reckon'd a greater Accompliſhment to know what Philoſophers have ſaid, than what wiſe Men have thought, and do ſtill think: And many People are look'd upon with contempt by the Philoſophers, not for having Opinions different from theirs, but for not expreſſing themſelves according to Art; when not one Sect of Philoſophers can agree with another in the choice of thoſe Terms of Art, about which they make ſo much ado. Nay, Philoſophers of the ſame Sect can hardly ſometimes rightly hit one another's Senſe: For they don't, like the Mathematicians, tell us in what determinate Senſe they uſe this or the other Word, by exact Definitions; and perhaps ſhou'd they attempt it, their Definitions wou'd want new Deſcriptions. This is not all; it often happens that the ſame Philoſopher uſes the ſame Word ſometimes in a philoſophical, at other times in the vulgar Senſe. Hence ariſe perpetual Logomachys between the common People and Philoſophers, between Philoſophers of different Sects, and not ſeldom of the ſame.

George

Chap. 5. *George Calixtus*, in his Judgment concerning the Controverſys between the *Lutherans* and *Reform'd*, ſpeaking of thoſe verbal Altercations which have their riſe from Philoſophical and Theological Terms and Expreſſions, ſays, "It's an eaſy matter to miſunderſtand "and miſapply them, ſince the Sciences are "taught after a new Method, that of *Ramus*, who has partly laid aſide thoſe Terms "of Art; and thoſe which he has ſtill retain'd, are otherwiſe underſtood than they "were by the Antients: ſo that the generality of People underſtand them not at all, "or in an unuſual and repugnant Senſe." I ſhall conclude this Chapter with the words of *Stephen Gauſſen*, in *Diſſert. de Nat. Theol.* "*Ariſtotle*, ſays he, divides the Cauſes into the "Material, Formal, Efficient and Final; and "the Efficient Cauſe into the Procatarctick, "Proegumenick, and Inſtrumental. Very well "for the Divines! But, alas, for the poor "Diſtinctions! they have been ſufficiently "tortur'd, and drag'd head and ſhoulders "into every Page of the Syſtem, whether "the Matter requir'd, or indeed wou'd bear "it, or no: So that by theſe their laudable "Endeavours, inſtead of one Controverſy, "we had preſently ſix or ſeven, which had "never been thought of but for theſe Diſtinctions. Theſe have brought Wrangling and "Contention into faſhion; and for any thing "I can ſee, they are like to continue ſo."

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The Faults of the Diſputants, and firſt of thoſe who expreſs their Sentiments in obſcure Expreſſions.

HOW far the Defects of Languages have occaſion'd Contentions about Words, has been already conſider'd; how far the Diſputants themſelves have contributed to them, we come now to examine; and they are, we ſhall find, Reſpondent and Opponent both to blame: One for not propoſing his Opinion clearly, and the other for not taking it right. The former, of whom we ſhall treat in this Chapter, is too often guilty of obſcure Words, and intricate Expreſſions.

This in ſome is an affected Fault; in others, and thoſe very great Genius's, it's perfectly involuntary; they can't expreſs themſelves clearly: They themſelves readily and eaſily apprehending other Authors dark Writings, are too apt to think that other Readers can do the like; or take it for granted there's no Obſcurity in the matter, becauſe they can find none. I wiſh ſuch wou'd take more notice of *Quintilian*'s excellent Precept: He charges his Orator to make it his great care, *not that his Auditors may underſtand him, but that they mayn't poſſibly miſtake him.* L. 8. c. 2.

Some

Chap. 6. Some think, if they themſelves underſtand their own meaning, that of conſequence others muſt alſo; and therefore ſometimes leave out ſome Word or Explication, without which the reſt is unintelligible; not conſidering that tho the Author himſelf can eaſily ſupply the Defect in his own Mind, yet his Readers are not all Conjurers. Others are of Opinion truly, that their Readers are altogether as attentive at the peruſal of their Writings, as they themſelves were at the compoſing them: But this is a Conceit ſpringing only from Self-Love, and a fond Belief, that others think as highly of us and our Performances as we our ſelves do. Sometimes the Words are ill-plac'd, and the Method confus'd, which muſt needs cauſe Obſcurity; nothing preſerving the Perſpicuity of a Diſcourſe, more than duly obſerving Regularity and Order. This we often fail of, by not being enough attentive, and by ſuffering our Thoughts to ramble too far from the Subject we were upon. Sometimes, eſpecially in publick Diſputations, we make too much haſte, and begin a Sentence before we have well conſider'd how to make an end of it: The Heat our Mind is in, deſtroys its Light, and hinders it from perceiving the proper Order in which it ought to range its Thoughts and Words; and Confuſion in the one neceſſarily breeds Confuſion in the other. *Des Cartes* was not altogether in the wrong, when he ſaid, "That the great Qualification requiſite "for an Orator, next to his excelling in Judg-"ment, was an Ability on all occaſions to "diſpoſe his Thoughts in ſo eaſy and natural

"a

" a Method, that every one might without " difficulty clearly and diſtinctly underſtand " his meaning." I had rather this Philoſopher had made this the Qualification of a Doctor, or Teacher, than of an Orator. For many times an abrupt Sentence, whoſe Parts are immethodical and almoſt incoherent, move the Paſſions, and perſuade more forcibly than a regular well-turn'd Period; witneſs that Line of *Virgil* ſpoken by *Niſus*, Chap. 6.

Me, me; I'm here, who did it: kill me then.

Sometimes the Obſcurity we find in Books, is plainly the Effect of the Dimneſs of the Authors Underſtanding; who oftentimes, by endeavouring to outdo themſelves, think confuſedly, and talk unintelligibly; and by ſtriving to raiſe their Thoughts a little higher than ordinary, many times perfectly loſe ſight of them. We often complain we have not Words to explain our Thoughts, before we have well conſider'd the Matter; for as *Horace* ſays,

We can't well miſs of Words to explicate
Things we well underſtand—— De Arte Poetica.

And there are ſome in the World, and not a few, who talk at random they know not what; either babbling about *Chimera's*, or prating about things beyond the ſtretch of Human Underſtanding: and if theſe can be underſtood, it's ſtrange to me. Many of this ſort of Gentlemen you may find amongſt our Diſputants, who reckon it a piece of Honour to

Chap. 6. to ſtand their ground, right or wrong. The Reſpondent truly is to defend his Theſis: but perhaps it's indefenſible. That's nothing; he muſt defend it. But he has not one ſutable word left to urge in its defence: All this won't excuſe him, he thinks; he muſt hold on, if it be from *June* to *January*, till his Opponent be ſo civil to him, or ſo merciful to himſelf, as to be ſilent. If for the preſent he has loſt the uſe of his Underſtanding, his Adverſary ſhall know he has not loſt the uſe of his Tongue. 'Tis the very ſame Caſe with the Opponent: Tho he be ever ſo well ſatisfy'd of the Truth of what he oppoſes, he muſt not preſently lay down the Cudgel. No, that's diſhonourable for a Man of his Parts. He muſt talk on, tho he has not one word to offer that ſo much as looks like a tolerable Reaſon for his Diſſent. And,

Some of our Learned Gentlemen, even when they are engag'd in theſe Diſputes, will gravely and formally deliver ſublime Nonſenſe, unintelligible Cant, ſenſleſs Jargon, merely to ſtun their Hearers or Readers; and to poſſeſs 'em with a conceit, how much theſe great Doctors underſtand more than they, poor Souls! do. Theſe Dons are not of *Craſſus*'s mind in *Cicero*, who ſays, "That the Orator who talks about what he "does not well underſtand, can make a Diſ-"courſe fit for nothing but to be laugh'd "at. For, ſays he, what can be more like "Frenzy, Dotage, or Diſtraction, than to "pretend to impoſe upon People with a "parcel of fine words, indeed, taken apart; "but which, when put together, have nei-"ther Senſe nor Meaning?

Our

Our Learned Philoſophers have in all Ages (I am not ſo well read as to tell you by what Patent) enjoy'd the Liberty of nonſenſical—— no, unintelligible Words, to conceal their Meaning perhaps; or to ſpeak a bold word for once, to make themſelves ſeem to ſay ſomething, when indeed they ſay nothing. Ask a Philoſopher the reaſon why the Loadſtone attracts Iron? 'Twou'd be unſeemly and aukward for a Man of his Character to profeſs his Ignorance, or ſtand ſtill and ſay nothing: And I'll warrant him, he's too much a Man to take up with that vulgar, poor-ſpirited, pitiful Expreſſion, *I can't tell.* No, no; he knows better things. As ſoon as he has ſtrok'd his Beard, and compos'd his Countenance, you ſhall hear him——Pray be attentive. "The Cauſe, ſays he, of this moſt "ſurprizing Phœnomenon in Nature, is the "*ſubſtantial* Form of the Loadſtone: which, "becauſe it is (to the great detriment of "Natural Philoſophy) together with all o-"ther ſubſtantial Forms, utterly unknown, "unleſs it be that they are of an active na-"ture; we muſt endeavour to underſtand it "by its Quality. Now its *Quality* is not a "*prime Quality*, ſince it does not immediate-"ly flow from the *Elementary Form.* It's "therefore a *ſecondary Quality*, ariſing from "the *Form* of a *mixt* Body. Now, *Qualitys* "are either *apparent* or *occult.* And theſe "latter are divided into *Sympathys* and *Anti-"pathys.* This *ſecondary Quality* of the Load-"ſtone, is to be reckon'd amongſt the *Occult "Qualitys*; the *attractive Power* which we find "in it, being a *Species* of thoſe *Sympathys*

Chap. 6.

"which

Chap. 6. " which we had occaſion juſt now to explain." Who wou'd imagine but that ſuch words as theſe, pronounc'd with a grave and magiſterial Air, muſt needs contain ſome ſublime myſterious Senſe? Yet if you examine 'em, you'll find 'em to be a Sound without Senſe. And you may almoſt venture to ſay of the Philoſopher what *Æſop*'s Fox did of the Statue: *The Gentleman has a very fine Head, I'll aſſure you; but the misfortune is, I can find no Brains.* Every one confeſſes, who knows the difference between *Spirit* and *Body*, that Spirits are ſaid to be in a place after another manner than Bodys are. Ask the Schoolmen the difference, they'l tell you in the twinkling of an eye, that Bodys are in a place *circumſcriptively*, but Spirits *definitively*. If you can remember theſe two hard words, ask 'em the meaning of 'em, and you'l be juſt as wiſe as you was before. Others will have Spirits not to be *in a place*, but to be *ſomewhere*. Ask 'em the difference between being *in a place* and *ſomewhere*, and they'l pretend to laugh at your Ignorance. But you may ſtay long enough before they be able to give you an Anſwer.

That great Philoſopher *Malebranch*, ſpeaking of inſignificant words, ſays, " That People take one anothers words upon content. " And if their Sound be not harſh and diſ- " agreeable to their ears, they have very " little Concern for their Senſe. They are " immediately and without much examination " taken for current Coin. Truth has nothing " to do in our ordinary Converſe; neither " Speakers nor Hearers ſeeming to have any " regard

Recher. de la Ver. *Tom.* 3. *p.* 179.

" regard for it. The greateſt Gift of Na- Chap. 6.
" ture, many think, and the moſt certain
" way to pleaſe, is the knack of talking *much*;
" no matter how little to the purpoſe. And
" the moſt effectual way to ruin the *Carteſians*,
" Horſe and Foot, is, when you attack 'em,
" to be always provided with a Magazine of
" *unintelligible* Words: Theſe, if any thing,
" will certainly do your buſineſs." The words the Author ſpeaks of, are thoſe of an unlimited general Senſe; which repreſent to us ſome general confus'd Idea, but nothing particular and diſtinct. Expreſſions of this ſort are very numerous: Such is that when People talk of Bodys *tending to the Centre*; that they fall downwards by reaſon of their *intrinſick Grævity*; that they aſcend becauſe of their *Levity*; that they are mov'd by *Nature*; that they change their *Forms*; that they act by ſome *Virtue*, *Quality*, or *Faculty*. In ſhort, ſuch are all words which don't diſtinctly repreſent to us either the *Thing* it ſelf, or its *Mode*. To thoſe who content themſelves with ſuch Expreſſions, he juſtly applies the words of *Syrac*, *The Knowledg of the Ignorant conſiſts in unintelligible Words*. This ſame Author does not ſtick to affirm, " That many
" Writers compoſe many Volumes, who have
" not a tolerable underſtanding of the Things
" of which they treat."

Thus much of the Kinds and Cauſes of that Obſcurity of Words and Phraſes which is involuntary. How this adminiſters occaſion of contending about Words, is but too evident. For when we diſpute with a Perſon whom we don't underſtand, we differ not

Chap. 6. perhaps in Opinion; but about one another's Words, which neither of us underſtand. Whenever People talk obſcurely, you may reaſonably expect a Diſpute about Words. But if any, whether in the heat of Diſputation or no, ſpeak what they themſelves don't underſtand, or what they know to be nonſenſe; this occaſions that ridiculous way of Diſputing, which in the third Chapter we call'd *blind Logomachy*.

The ſame Miſchief ariſes from an *affected voluntary* Obſcurity of Stile. This is a great Fault, but no new one, *Quintilian* tells us: Since *Livy* mentions a Schoolmaſter, one of whoſe Precepts to his Scholars was, *That they took care to ſpeak obſcurely*; out of a ridiculous perſuaſion, That *nothing can be elegantly and delicately ſpoken, but what needs an Interpreter. For ſome*, as *Eraſmus* ſays, *never think themſelves ingenious, but when they ſpeak in Riddles.* If we wou'd have Examples of the Philoſophers; *Lucretius*, Lib. 1. tells us of *Heraclitus* a great Word-warrior, and famous for his Obſcurity of Stile. And the Cuſtom of the *Armenians*, *Chaldeans*, *Egyptians*, the *Magi* among the *Perſians*, the *Brachmans* among the *Indians*, the *Ethiopians* and *Tuſcans*, to conceal not only Divine but Human Wiſdom and Knowledg, is commonly known. That they receiv'd this Cuſtom from *Noah*, is a pitiful Fable, whoſe Original is owing to a Book which goes under the name of *Beroſus*. From the *Tuſcans* this Cuſtom was deriv'd to the *Romans*; and from the *Egyptians* to the *Greeks*, by means of *Orpheus* and *Pythagoras*.

Inſt. Orat. *l.* 8. *c.* 2.

The

The Fables of the *Greeks* are well known; which, they ſay, comprehend the whole Body of Philoſophy. So are the *Numbers* of *Pythagoras*, and *Plato* who borrow'd them from *Pythagoras*. They were ſo intricate, that in ſucceeding Times any thing of more than ordinary Obſcurity was proverbially ſaid to be more obſcure than the Numbers of *Plato*. *Macrobius* tells us, that the *Pythagoreans* and *Plato* obſcur'd with Fables every thing they ſaid of the Aerial Deitys; and that when they ſpoke of the *MOST HIGH* and of *the Mind*, they fled to Similitudes and Examples. *Cicero*, who was ſo exceeding well vers'd in *Plato*'s Writings, owns there are very obſcure places in his *Timæus*. And *Marcilius Ficinus*, the late great Reſtorer of the *Platonick* Philoſophy, ſays, "That thoſe things "which *Plato* wrote concerning the Soul, are "by no means to be underſtood in a literal "ſenſe." Chap. 6.

The *Admirabilia* of the Stoicks are well known; as alſo the *Arcana* of other Philoſophers: and *Ariſtotle*'s Books of *deep Learning*, his *Acroamaticks*, *Eſotericks*, *Epopticks*, and *myſterious Writings*: and he who, as *Simplicius* writes, inſtead of a Veil to conceal his Writings, us'd obſcure words to diſguiſe their Meaning. *Themiſtius*, one of *Ariſtotle*'s Interpreters, does not ſcruple to ſay, "That "he endeavours to darken and render his "Writings obſcure, as the *Cuttle*, who ſtains "all the Water about him with his Blood, "when he's in danger of being taken." When *Alexander* was diſpleas'd that *Ariſtotle* publiſh'd to the world what he had taught

Chap. 6. him privately: Says *Ariſtotle* to him, "Be "of good courage, Sir; no body will be "able to underſtand my Writings, beſides "you and others my conſtant Hearers." Perhaps not they, if what *Themiſtius* ſays be true, That *'tis madneſs to pretend to underſtand all the Sayings of* Ariſtotle. And what renders it yet more probable, is the multitude of *Ariſtotle*'s Interpreters: the number of whom, if we may believe *Franciſcus Patricius*, amounted in his time to twelve thouſand.

Diſcuſ. Peripat. *Tom.* 1. *l.* 10. *p.* 145.

Joh. Serranus complains of *Plato*'s Followers, that they had a great Veneration for his obſcure way of writing; that inſtead of interpreting him, they were wonderfully tickled with the pleaſure of finding out Myſterys, and with adding Darkneſs to his Obſcurity.

The *Ariſtotelians*, who cou'd equal their Maſter in nothing elſe, at writing obſcurely are become greater Doctors than he. So that after all the *Greek*, *Latin*, and *Arabick* Interpretations of him, he's more intelligible without 'em than with 'em. This we owe principally to the Schoolmen, who undertook to tranſlate *Ariſtotle*, not as he was in the Original, but as tranſlated from *Arabick*.

After this barbarous filthy Rubbiſh had over-run Philoſophy, Lord! what a confus'd Chaos did it immediately become! What a deſolate Wilderneſs was it, cover'd with Briars and Thorns, Darkneſs and Obſcurity! Monſtrous Diſtinctions, and multitudes of Abſtractions, were introduc'd into Philoſophy. There you might find *Entia Rationis objectivè*, *ſubjectivè*, and *effectivè*: And the Diſtinction of a Diſtinction into that which is

is *realis*, and what they call *Rationis*; and this latter is either a Diſtinction *Rationis Ratiocinantis*, or *Rationis Ratiocinatæ*. Then follow, rang'd in due order, your *greater and leſſer Realitys*, *modal Entitys*, *Formalitys*; then *Acts*, whether *ſubſtantial*, *accidental*, *prime*, *ſecondary*, *compounded*, *divided*, *ſignate*, *exercite*: Then the *States*, *Amplications*, *Principles of Individuation*, *Suppoſitalitys*, *ſignate Matter*, *Hæcceitys*, *Ecceitys*, *Petreitys*, *Quiddítys*, *Identitys*, *Deſires after a Form*, *a Dread of a Vacuum*, and whole Cart-loads of Qualitys. But it's impoſſible to number up all the Elegancys of the *Albertiſts*, *Occamiſts*, *Thomiſts*, *Scotiſts*, *Reals* and *Nominals*: Such wretched work have theſe Gentlemen made both in Philoſophy and Theology, by mangling and ſhewing them in vizards and maſquerade, and by falſe lights; that inſtead of ſeeing 'em in their native Lovelineſs and Beauty, you can diſcover little or nothing of 'em in their Writings, but Paint, Obſcurity and Deformity. Chap. 6.

Ask what Reaſons induce 'em to write ſo obſcurely? They will tell you, it's to preſerve Philoſophy from becoming vulgar and common: That it ought to be ſeen but ſeldom and by a few; by which means, when it appears in publick, its Majeſty will ſeem to be ſo much the more illuſtrious. They'l tell you, this was always the difference between the Sophiſts and Philoſophers; the former boaſted and made a ſhew of what they knew, and the latter conceal'd it. They add, "That the expoſing of Nature open and "naked, is injurious to her; who, as ſhe "has deny'd the knowledg of her ſelf to

Chap. 6. " the Vulgar by natural Difficultys, ſo wou'd " willingly have her more ſecret ways be " treated of, not plainly, but by Allegory " and Fable: That Religion it ſelf is myſte- " rious, by which means it's preſerv'd from " Contempt." They ſay in the laſt place, that by this method they preſerve it from being proſtituted to the Cenſures and Ill-Uſage of the Vulgar; and alledg what *Simplicius* ſays of *Ariſtotle*, That he purpoſely wrote obſcurely in his *Acroamaticks*, or Books of deep Learning, to the end he might deter the Slothful and Lazy from the Reading and Conſideration of 'em.

Now, don't theſe Reaſons ſeem very plauſible and honeſt? And yet, were it not for the great Veneration I have for Antiquity, I ſhou'd venture to ſay they are all mere Colour, Cloke and Pretence. 'Twas reckon'd a very great Crime to publiſh the Holy Rites of the Gentile Worſhip. The reaſon was, ſays *Julius Firmicus, leſt Divine Science being publiſh'd, ſhou'd come to the knowledg of the Profane.* But *Arnobius* will inform you much better, that the reaſon why they kept private their Religious Ceremonys, was, that People might not be acquainted with their Impiety, Impurity and Folly.

I can't but ſuſpect ſomewhat like this in the antient Philoſophers: They were purpoſely obſcure in their Writings, fearing, if they ſpoke out clearly and intelligibly, they ſhou'd diſcover the Imperfection of their Knowledg, the Weakneſs and Falſhood of their Principles; and that the greateſt part of their Writings and Opinions are, at beſt,

doubtful,

doubtful, *uncertain*, *incoherent*, and *dull*. All this wou'd be ſoon obſerv'd by diligent, impartial and underſtanding Readers. Better therefore ſell theſe Wares in the dark, leſt the Buyers perceive by day-light that they are damag'd and ſpoil'd; and imitate the Players, who act by night, that they may the better put off Paint for Beauty, Tinſel for Gold, and Briſtol Stones for Brillants. Theſe cunning Men foreknew, that talking myſteriouſly wou'd raiſe their Reputation. For, as *Lucretius* ſays,—*Myſterious Words are Fools Idols*——They foreſaw that others wou'd pretend to know what they themſelves the Authors never did, that they might be reckon'd Men of a quicker Apprehenſion than their Neighbours. That ſome wou'd ſeek for Myſterys, others wou'd deplore their own Dulneſs for not underſtanding, and others ſtill live in hopes that once in their lifetime they ſhou'd be illuminated to that degree, as to underſtand this *Myſterious Learning*; or rather, this *intolerable Cant* and *ſenſleſs Jargon*. Whether they foreſaw that their Followers wou'd beſtow ſo much pains, and rack their Wits in explaining and defending their infallible Oracles, that we ſhou'd not think of a new Philoſophy in two thouſand years time; I ſhan't determine. My Lord *Bacon* tells theſe People plainly, they affected Obſcurity, that they might the more eaſily by falſe lights put off their adulterated and ſophiſticated Wares. Their Philoſophy is indeed nothing in the world but a huge Clamour and Noiſe of Words, and about Words. Inſtead of being Interpreters

Chap. 6. of *Nature*, they became Expoſitors and Nomenclators: So that Philoſophy, as *Fr. Patricius* ſaid, for four hundred years time was nothing but quarrelling about Words. In the Romiſh Church, the *Peripatetick* Philoſophy is wonderfully cry'd up and eſteem'd: They ſee many of their Errors are conceal'd by it. For which reaſon the Univerſity of *Paris*, *A. D.* 1611. made a Decree, which in 1624. was ratify'd by the Parliament of that City, in which they expreſs'd themſelves to this purpoſe; "That *Ariſtotle*'s Philoſophy cou'd not "be confuted, without undermining the "Foundations of the Romiſh Church."

At this time theſe Men, in oppoſition to the *Carteſians*, will by no means allow the Doctrine of clear and diſtinct Conceptions to be taught and inculcated in their Schools: this wou'd ruin their Cauſe. *Ariſtotle* will ſerve their turn at a dead lift much better. The Adverſarys of the Church have indeed, as the Learned Jeſuit *Rapin* informs us, written againſt him very ſharply; ſuch as *Luther*, *Melanctthon*, *Bucer*, *Calvin*, *Poſtellus*, and *P. Sarpius*: but their Invectives he reckons to be very much for the Honour both of himſelf and his Doctrine.

Thus we ſee the Reaſons why Men affect Obſcurity and Ambiguity. Sometimes they do this in jeſt, pleaſing themſelves for a ſhort time with others Miſtakes. But how often in earneſt, by thoſe who propoſe Queſtions for Diſputation after ſuch a manner, that if you clear one Ambiguity or Equivocation, they'l plague you with twenty more? of which if you find one that's any thing to the purpoſe,

purpoſe, I'll aſſure you, you have made a ſaving Bargain. Their Rules and Philoſophical Axioms are endleſs cauſes of Contention; being ſo *worded* and *contriv'd*, that neither Opponent nor Reſpondent can well want a Diſtinction to help themſelves upon occaſion; but may diſpute till they are hoarſe, before they are either of 'em any nearer the Knowledg of the Truth. Chap. 6.

In this particular they are very much to be blam'd, who cauſeleſly change the Significations of Words. With theſe may the *Chymiſts* be number'd, who ſpeak as ænigmatically as the Oracle at *Delphos*: alſo the Inventors of new Sentences, Words, and Methods of Speaking and Writing. Thus *Ramus* beſtow'd a new-faſhion'd Coat upon *Ariſtotle*, as *Ariſtotle* had very kindly done before for his Maſter *Plato*. Add to theſe, ſuch who boaſt of their Paradoxes and Noſtrums; and ſcorn to talk as the Vulgar, tho their Thoughts are exactly on a level. This was a great Fault of the Stoicks, and which occaſion'd abundance of Strife. They were more extravagant in their Writings than the Poets; and, by refuſing to uſe the common Methods of ſpeaking, ſeem'd to militate againſt Notions receiv'd by all Mankind.

Neither ought they to eſcape Cenſure, who without neceſſity uſe words in a good ſenſe, which are generally underſtood in a bad one. Such Words ſound harſh in our ears, are apt to make us give 'em a perverſe Interpretation; and then, *To your Arms, Gentlemen.* Thus *Epicurus* cou'dn't but know what an ill Sound the very *Name* of *Pleaſure*

carry'd

Chap. 6. carry'd with it in the apprehenſions of many. And perhaps *Des Cartes* had too much Vanity in him, for preſuming that there were none either of ſo little Subtlety or of ſo croſs-grain'd a Temper, but what muſt infallibly underſtand his Meaning. He had however no regard for ſuch; by means of which Neglect, a multitude of verbal Contentions have ever ſince perplex'd the Learned World, which, but for him, had never been heard or thought of.

To conclude this Chapter: If they who have introduc'd the School-Terms into *Theology*, that they might not fail of having matter for Contention; as they have done, for inſtance, who diſpute ſo earneſtly about the *Matter* and *Form* of the Sacraments: If theſe, I ſay, are in a fault; I can't think thoſe altogether excuſable, who confine themſelves indeed to *Scriptural* Expreſſions, but underſtand them in a ſenſe quite different from what was ever receiv'd by the generality of Chriſtians. Theſe perhaps may be found to be altogether as unintelligible as the Scholaſtick Gentlemen. So that it's my Opinion, that he teaches the *Liberal Sciences*, and that beſt of Sciences, *Theology*, after the beſt manner, who ſo ſpeaks and writes as to be eaſily underſtood, if not by all, yet by the Majority of thoſe who hear him.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of thoſe who take the Words of their Antagoniſts in a wrong Senſe.

THUS much of thoſe who by writing obſcurely give occaſion for *Contending about Words.* We come now to ſpeak ſomething of ſuch as miſinterpret and miſrepreſent the Senſe of their Antagoniſts: who pride themſelves with an Imagination that they have a clear Notion of their Adverſary's Senſe; and under this perſuaſion fall upon him, according to the uſual ſaying, without fear or wit. Like ſome in their ſleep, who dreaming of their Enemys, fall foul upon their Friends. Some miſunderſtand their Adverſarys merely out of Ignorance, others out of Deſign: They won't ſeem to underſtand them, leſt they loſe an opportunity of quarrelling.

They who miſunderſtand their Adverſarys merely out of Ignorance, are generally Perſons of an unconſtant wavering Genius. They are always in haſte, and have not the patience to ſit ſtill and calmly conſider the Truth of this or that Aſſertion; but run on to a third, before they have well examin'd the ſecond; to a fourth, before they underſtand the third; and ſo on to the end of the Chapter. Hence 'tis they underſtand very little of what they read, ſo perfectly as to make

Chap. 7. make but a tolerable Judgment of it: and yet to hear how confidently they talk, how boldly they cenſure this Book and that Author, wou'd tempt a Man, who did not know them, to think them ſome of the niceſt Judges, and greateſt Criticks in *Europe*. They have ſlightly read over a Chapter, or perhaps but the firſt Page of *Des Cartes*'s Meditations. Ask them, Well, Gentlemen, what's your Opinion of the Philoſopher? *Of the Philoſopher!* they'l retort upon you; of the *Atheiſt*, the *Sceptick!* But, ſay you, he proves the Exiſtence of a God. Yes, they'l reply, ſo did *Vaninus*: He's an Infidel, ſay no more of him. How I pity thee, poor *Des Cartes!*

Some Perſons are naturally uncapable of Attention, and of holding their Thoughts long fixt and intent upon any Subject; but this Levity and Fickleneſs generally ſprings from ſome Diſtemper of the Mind. In ſome from an Ambition of being thought Men of a quick Apprehenſion; they pleaſe themſelves to be thought like *Phormio* in *Terence*, of whom *Geta* gives this Character;

Phorm. Act. 4. Sc. 2.

A more ſharp cunning Man I never knew,
I had not ſpoken half, he underſtood me!

Sometimes it ariſes from a haughty Contempt of the Authors they read; they are prejudic'd againſt them, have been told by ſome body as wiſe as themſelves, that there's little ſolid and rational in their Writings: and ſo they are induc'd to read them as ſlightly as they imagine their Authors write.

write. Sometimes it's owing to a fond deſire of knowing every thing: People who are too ſollicitous to know every thing, are often found to have clear and diſtinct Conceptions of nothing valuable and worthy to be known. This is often the Caſe of Men of much reading. It's impoſſible for them to read with due Attention; and if ſo, it's as impoſſible they ſhou'd with Underſtanding. They fancy they ſee Things which they do not; and if they find ſome certain Words us'd both by the Antients and Moderns, they preſently conclude their Opinions to be the ſame. If a Modern mentions the word *Corpuſcle*, he's immediately a Diſciple of *Democritus*: If he ſpeaks of *Fate*, he's a *Stoick*; if of *Pleaſure*, an *Epicurean*: If he uſes any Words, by which any Hereticks thought fit to expreſs themſelves heretofore, he'll be immediately branded for one himſelf, be his Opinion ever ſo different, harmleſs and unexceptionable. Chap. 7.

Another ſort of People, who oppoſe what they don't underſtand, are your ſuperficial Wits, who never look any farther than upon the Surface and Outſide of Things. Theſe differ from thoſe giddy People we ſpoke of laſt: They miſunderſtand their Authors for want of Attention; theſe, we now ſpeak of, for want of Subtlety and Judgment. I don't mean ſuch ſtupid Wretches, who with much ado get by heart the names of the Sciences, but never underſtand the Sciences themſelves: But thoſe who are not altogether deſtitute of Parts, who ſoon ſee and diſtinguiſh the Outſide of Things; their Misfortune is, here they ſtick. Outward Appearances ſtrike their Senſes

Chap. 7. Senſes and Fancys ſo forcibly and feelingly, that the Mind can't be prevail'd with to any further conſideration of the nature of the thing.

Rech. de la Ver. Tom. 1. Part 2. cap. 1. §. 2. cap. 9. §. 1. *Malebranch* ſpeaks much, but very accurately of this Defect of the Underſtanding; to him we refer the Reader. 'Tis to our purpoſe to obſerve, that the Edg and Bent of theſe Mens Wits, like theirs who are quite ſtupid, proceed not a ſtep farther than Words, Forms and Methods, whether they be learning the Sciences, or examining the Senſe of an Author, or judging of a Controverſy. Hence they imagine, that all who ſpeak like one another, think like one another; and that they who differ in Words, muſt needs alſo differ in Opinion. Such People ſeldom diſpute about any thing but Words, this is the Delight of their Lives. And tho it be true what *Carteſius* ſays, "That the Thoughts of "all Perſons are more ingag'd, and more "converſant with Words than Things;" yet it is as true, that there's a vaſt difference between him who contents himſelf with the bare knowledg of Words, and him who makes uſe of Words as *Helps*, to bring him to the knowledg of Things.

Prin. Part 1. §. 74.

If you'll give me leave for once to ſpeak a bold Truth, I may confidently affirm, that the greateſt part of the Learning of Multitudes fam'd for it, conſiſts purely in the knowledg of Words; I don't mean in Grammar, which profeſſedly treats about Words, but in the Sciences: they have not the leaſt juſt Notion of any thing, beſides thoſe *Barbariſms*, which they have dignify'd with the Title of Terms of Art.

Gauſſenus,

Gauſſenus, ſo often quoted by us, ingenuouſly confeſſes, " That he, who had for " four years publickly read Logick and Me- " taphyſicks, whenever he was oblig'd by " Cuſtom to argue, in the uſual manner, in " Schools, cou'd not but bluſh, out of a juſt " Conſciouſneſs how little he underſtood " more than the Vulgar beſides Terms of Art: " And how ſordid and mean, how unbe- " coming a Gentleman and a Scholar it was, " to take the Doctor's Chair, and there ſet " to Sale, and cheat People, with nothing " but Noiſe, Smoke and Trumpery." In another place he ſays, " That beſides a few " Terms of Art, moſt Divines have nothing " to diſtinguiſh them from their Neigh- " bours." Chap. 7. Diſſert. de Util. Philoſ. ad Theol.

Hobbes is juſtly blam'd by *Carteſius*, for ſaying, " That perhaps Judgment was nothing " elſe but the Compoſition or joining of " two Names of Things, or Modes, by the " Verb *IS*." He ſhou'd have ſaid, " That " the joining two *Conceptions*, ſignify'd by " thoſe *Names*, by the intervention of the " Verb *IS*, is what we properly call *Judg-* " *ment*." And yet look abroad into the World, you'll find *Hobbes*'s Definition to agree with the Judgment of a far greater number of Mankind, than that of *Carteſius*. And as their Judgments are, ſuch are their Reaſonings; ſpeak otherwiſe than they do, and you diſſent from them; for they can ſee the difference between the words with their own Eyes, but it's a harder matter to perceive the Agreement there is in their Senſe. They'll never own you for *Orthodox*, till you ſubſcribe

Chap. 7. ſubſcribe to their Opinions in their own very Words, or in their own Method; whether their Words ſignify any thing or no, is not material, ſubſcribe, and you are all Friends.

The natural Cauſes of this Defect of the Underſtanding, *Malebranch* has treated of at large, as has been ſaid. To the conſideration of theſe, add that of our Education: Children from their very Infancy are habituated to Words which they don't underſtand; their Forms of ſaluting, congratulating, giving Thanks; nay, their very Prayers, Sentences of Holy Scripture, and Catechiſms, which they get by heart, are all *Arabick* to them. So are many of thoſe Expreſſions they learn from their Parents, Servants and Neighbours; they ſpeak them like Parrots, and ſo they underſtand them.

When we come to the Study of Arts and Diſcipline, what a vaſt number of Precepts, Definitions, Diviſions, Queſtions, Anſwers, Maxims, Theorems, Diſtinctions, and Terms of Art can we readily give an account of, in anſwer to the Queſtions uſually ask'd us? Change but a word or two in one of the uſual Queſtions, 'tis ten to one if you don't ſtrike us dumb. We are much like Schoolboys, who repeat their Leſſon out of the Latin Grammar very perfectly, but don't underſtand one Rule, nay one word they have ſaid. By the way, it ſeems a ſtrange unaccountable Method of teaching Latin, for Maſters to teach us by Rules written in Latin, a Language which at that time we know nothing of, and therefore learn becauſe we know nothing of it.

But

But I don't abſolutely condemn all this: The Memory ought to be kept in exerciſe, as long as 'tis in its Vigour; and we do well to commit to its keeping not only Things, but Words, Forms of Speaking, Holy Sayings, Emphatical Expreſſions, and many others, which may be of uſe to us thro the whole courſe of our Lives: But, without neceſſity, which I think very ſeldom happens, never charge your Memory with words which you don't underſtand. I don't deny but Childrens Memorys ought, in the firſt place, to be principally regarded and exercis'd; but then, as ſoon as ever you diſcover in them the leaſt Sparks of Judgment and Reaſon, theſe are to be incourag'd, quicken'd and cheriſh'd with the utmoſt Diligence, and moſt prudent Management. Let their Memory be exercis'd, not brutiſhly, but rationally: Let it diſdain to keep thoſe Words in ſtore, the meaning of which they know nothing of. Their Maſters ſhou'd remember they are teaching rational Creatures, and not Parrots and Pyes; for 'tis a thouſand to one, if People be bred like Magpyes, but they prove Jackdaws the longeſt day they have to live. The Raven which, after the Fight at *Actium*, ſaluted *Auguſtus* in theſe words, *Hail Ceſar, Thou conquering General!* ſeem'd to ſpeak very much to the purpoſe, but indeed knew not the meaning of one word he ſaid: Yet the Bird is not to be laugh'd at, he has many Fellows amongſt Men, even thoſe who number themſelves with the Learned. *Huartus* tells us, "There are "Men who, exactly like the Brutes, ſpeak "and act only by inſtinct; ſo that they often

Chap. 7.

Scrutin. Ingen. c. 2. p. 68.

Chap. 7. " talk much better than they can think or ap-
" prehend." This is owing to their Education; they are us'd to Sounds which have no Senſe, or a very uncertain one. They are accuſtom'd to ſpeak without conſideration, and think themſelves mighty wiſe and learned, if they have their Memorys ſtuff'd with inſignificant Words: They have been accuſtom'd to admire thoſe who talk readily, earneſtly and confidently of things which they don't underſtand: They are careful about Words, and as careleſs about their Meaning. Aſſertions, to which they have been habituated from their Childhood, they will have to be very clear, plain, evident and certain, tho they do not really underſtand them. If you differ with them in any of thoſe Points, give them Demonſtration from Morning till Night, in order to convince them they are in an Error; if they'l vouchſafe to hear, they will not hearken to you, nor believe one word you ſay.

Beſides thoſe who know nothing in the Sciences except Words, there are many, who when they hear the Dictates of their Tutors, or read Books, immediately apprehend, not only the Words, but the Senſe of them. But the Fault of theſe People is this; they never examine the Truth of what they hear and read, nor conſider it well; they don't digeſt it in their Minds, and conſequently can never have right Conceptions of the Connexion and Dependence of one thing upon another. *Seneca* ſays, *ſuch have Memory without Knowledg*; they have Wit and Senſe without Judgment; they can very well remember

the

the incoherent and independent Sayings of others: But by taking more care to remember the Words, than the Things ſignify'd by them, it often happens, that they retain the former in their Memory, but in time loſe all diſtinct Conceptions of the latter. Chap. 7.

They can underſtand and remember a Doctrine, ſays *Huartus*, and ſpeak of it methodically upon occaſion; but then, ask them the Reaſons or Cauſe of the Thing, and you'l ſoon find them very deficient, and that their Learning chiefly conſiſts in the knowledg of Words. This makes them very angry with thoſe, who diſuſe the old-faſhion'd unintelligible Words, and ſubſtitute better in their places. Take away a Beggar's Rags, and you leave him naked; ſo you do if you take from theſe the Liberty of uſing their own Words and Phraſes, ſince they are their Wealth, all the Delight they have, and what conceals and protects them in their Ignorance: they may then well cry out with *Hecuba* in *Euripides*,

Even now I was rich in Children; but, alas, at this time, poor old Woman as I am, I have not one left.

Some Perſons underſtand the Words they hear or read, and the Senſe of them too; retain both in their Memory, and never uſe the Words without the Senſe. The Misfortune of theſe is, that by means of a long Cuſtom of joining this and the other Idea, with this and the other Word, they can't abſtract one from the other, this *Idea* from that Word. Hence they reckon, that Truth is confin'd to this or the other Method of ſpeaking; it's in vain

Chap. 7. to argue with them. Unleſs you can alter the Texture and Traces of their Brain, they will never be able to ſeparate their own Senſe from their own Words: ſuch are thoſe who don't exerciſe their own Parts to find out the Truth, and deduce it from its proper and firſt Principles. They learn nothing of their own Mother-Wit, and by cloſe thinking, but depend wholly upon their Books and Tutors for all they have. Words make ſo ſtrong an Impreſſion upon theſe alſo, as is not eaſily, nor ſoon, if ever, worn out. Theſe Gentlemen will talk very fluently, Words are always at hand; and they'l conceive of Matters very readily. But all this while you muſt ſuppoſe them in the Track in which their Tutors did uſe to lead them; lead them out of that Path, put them out of their Method, and they can neither talk nor underſtand.

It's quite different with thoſe who make uſe of their own Reaſon; they generally think upon Things abſtracted from Words: conſequently when they come to explain their Opinions, Words do not flow in upon them, but they are forc'd to hunt after ſuch as are proper. So when they read others Writings, they can't ſo readily, as many perhaps of far leſs Ability, make themſelves Maſters of the Senſe: But when they have once maſter'd it, they underſtand it incomparably well. For, by ſeparating the Words from the Senſe, the Shell from the Kernel, they ſee the Things themſelves in their own nature, their Principles, Connexions and Conſequences; and this affords them matter for ſolid Contemplation.

Theſe

Theſe Gentlemen are too intent upon the Conſideration of Things, to be often guilty of contending about Words. They know that Words are mere arbitrary Signs, have no reſemblance of, or natural Connexion with the Things they ſignify, are conſequently of a doubtful meaning; and therefore as they are variable in themſelves, ſo they may be chang'd and vary'd by us whenever we ſee a juſt occaſion. Theſe don't dream of a natural Connexion between Truth, and certain particular Words of theirs, in which they find out deep *Myſterys*, and I know not what; or that Words ſo naturally ſignify the Things for which they ſtand, that they can't be chang'd, unleſs you change the nature of Things with them, which was the Opinion of no leſs a Man than *Plato*. Every body in our days rejects ſo abſurd an Opinion in words, 'tis pity they cou'd not alſo be prevail'd with to diſown and diſavow it in their Practice. Chap. 7.

From the cloſe Connexion which moſt People make between Words and Things, ariſes that Love which Men have for ſome Words, and the Diſlike they have for others. Inſtead of the Things belov'd, they idolize the Words by which they are ſignify'd. This is often a great Cauſe of Superſtition. Oh! You can't imagine what Majeſty, what Sanctity, what Authority, what hidden Virtue, Force and Power there is in ſome Words. 'Tis not enough to ſay that *Homer*'s Words are elegant, ſignificant, of a charming Sound, pleaſant and ſweet; yet ſtately, magnificent, *&c.* Alas! what's this to the

Chap. 7. purpoſe? Sir, if I am not much miſinform'd, *Homer*'s Poems will certainly cure you of all Diſeaſes. Drink as freely as you pleaſe of ſtrong Liquors from Morning till Night, and there is a certain Place in his Works, I can't immediately direct you to the very Page, which, duly apply'd according to Art, will certainly preſerve you from being tipſy. Other Parts of his Works, hung upon Apple-Trees, preſerves the Fruit: Some are good againſt the Toothach, and other parts of his Works will certainly cure the Gout, take my Word for't; a Diſtemper for ſo many Ages reckon'd incurable. If you are reſolv'd not to believe me, pray read *Ro. Keuchen. in Prolegom. notarum ad Serenum Samonicum*, and you'l find I don't always talk without Book.

To proceed; the Averſion we have from ſome Words is altogether as great as the Love we have for others. In the general Hiſtory of *Spain*, we have this Story: Says *Huartus*, Two *French* Ambaſſadors came thither, to deſire *Alphonſus* the Ninth to give one of his Daughters in Marriage to their Maſter King *Philip*. *Urraca*, the elder Siſter, was a charming Beauty; *Blanche*, the younger, was not ſo handſom: yet the Ambaſſadors, contrary to every one's Expectation, choſe *Blanche* for the ſake of her *Name*; the name *Urraca* having in it, they thought, ſomething odd, uncommon and ſhocking.

Scrutin. Ingen. c. 16. p. 501.

The name of *Henry* is to this Day in *France* reckon'd unfortunate for their Kings. And it's a Story worth relating, that of Pope *Paul* the Second, who being a very tall, majeſtick,

jeſtick, and every way handſom Man, when he was choſen Pope, took the name of *Formoſus* the Second; but when the Cardinals told him that the Carcaſe of *Formoſus* the Firſt, after it had loſt ſome of its Limbs, was thrown into the *Tyber*, the Gentleman was ſtartled, and ſoon weary of his pretty, handſom, dreadful Name. How abominable to us is the name of Tyrant? How hateful to the *Romans* and *Grecians* that of a King? And no further off than in *England*, and no longer ago than in the time of *Cromwel's* Protectorſhip, ſome People, as *Puffendorf* tells us, had ſuch a Hatred to the word *Kingdom*, that in repeating the Lord's Prayer, they wou'd not ſay, *Thy Kingdom come*, but *thy Commonwealth*, or *thy Republick come*. Free Citys hate the very name of an *Abſolute Prince*; and *Strada* tells us ſomewhere, that *Charles* the Fifth did uſe to ſay of the *Low-Countrymen*, *That none were more patient of Slavery, or more impatient of the Name.* Chap. 7. Diſſert. Select. Append. p. 585.

'Tis very well known, that I was always for incouraging Youth to repeat *Comedys* in the publick Schools and Academys. My Friends were eaſily convinc'd of the Uſefulneſs of ſuch Exerciſes; but beg'd of me, if I had any thoughts of bringing them into Reputation, not to call them *Comedys* (that's a word which ſounds ſtrangely in ſome Peoples Ears) but *Dialogues between young Students*; that then no body wou'd oppoſe my Deſign.

Examples of odious Words and Expreſſions are innumerable. Thus, in Theology, ſome can't bear the name of an *abſolute Decree*,

Chap. 7. nor others that of *Fate*. The word *Pleaſure* will caſt ſome into a Fever, and the word *Atoms* is as malignant to other Conſtitutions. Talk to ſome of *doubting of Things not evident*, 'tis well if you go to Bed in a whole Skin. The word *Idea*, and thoſe two harmleſs Adverbs, *clearly* and *diſtinctly*, are not by a few reckon'd monſtrous and intolerable Gueſts in a Chriſtian Country. One thinks it a dangerous Expreſſion to ſay, that God is *poſitively from himſelf*. Some will grant you that Brutes have no *thinking Souls*, if you will be ſo kind to them as not to call them mere *Machines*. Some abhor the word *Novelty*; and others hate to hear of *Philoſophical Liberty*. But to ſay all in a word, many think all Words us'd by an Author they don't eſteem, or once us'd by any in an ill Senſe, muſt always have an ill meaning. This often prevents them from reading excellent Senſe, becauſe it is expreſs'd partly in words againſt which they have conceiv'd an inveterate Prejudice. It often happens with theſe Gentlemen as it did with the *Roman Mob*; who, to revenge *Ceſar*'s Death, becauſe *Cornelius Cinna* was indeed one of the Conſpirators, murder'd *Helvius Cinna*, a Man altogether innocent of the matter, only becauſe he was of the ſame name. So our Diſputers often fall foul on their own Partys and Opinions, being blinded with prejudice againſt ſome certain Words, us'd perhaps in a different Senſe from what they imagine, to which they are reſolv'd never to be reconcil'd.

Nothing

Nothing occaſions us to oppoſe that which we don't underſtand, ſo much as Prejudice, which is paſſing a Judgment before we have heard the Merits of the Cauſe: Or as *Cicero* defines it, when we take things *unknown* for *known*, and blindly aſſent to them as ſuch: Or as in another place, when we raſhly aſſent to a Propoſition which is *falſe*, or, at beſt, not *evidently true*. Prejudices ſpring from two Cauſes: the firſt is a Deſire of knowing much; the ſecond is our Unwillingneſs to accuſtom our ſelves to ſuch great Attention and Diligence, and Labour, as is neceſſary to the Gratification of this our Deſire. Chap. 7. Lib. 1. de Offic. Lib. 1. de Divinat.

Of all Prejudices none are more miſchievous than thoſe wrong Judgments which we make of Men and their Opinions, without examining them. Self-Love makes Men rejoice, when they think they ſee any thing in themſelves by which they excel others. This is a Prejudice ſeldom conquer'd, eſpecially if Self-Love be aſſiſted with a mighty pretence of *Zeal for Religion*, and a *Love for Truth*.

Multitudes of Prejudices are inſtil'd into the Minds of Youth by Parents, Maſters, and others whom they love, and in whom they have a confidence. If theſe do but tell them of this or the other Author, what dangerous Tenets, what Poiſon, Hereſy, Sophiſtry, wrong Reaſoning; what impious, profane, ridiculous, abſurd Expreſſions and Doctrines he's guilty of maintaining: My young Maſter has enough of it, I'll warrant him, he never has any thing to do with him again, tho all the while the Book may be

Chap. 7. be a very learned, excellent, and valuable Performance.

Children ſometimes of a brisk Imagination, when they hear Bells ringing, fancy they hear them utter articulate Sounds; others ſee ſtrange Appearances in the Clouds: So prejudic'd Perſons meet with ſtrange monſtrous Opinions in Authors, for whom they have no kindneſs; which are really nothing but Fictions of their own Brain.

Many read Books purpoſely to find out thoſe Trifles, Errors, Fallacys, Hereſys, Blaſphemys, which, as they have been inform'd, make up a great part of the Book they are about to read. Theſe People ſeldom miſs their Aim: For being prepoſſeſs'd with a Notion of the Book's being heretical, they'd have a poor Invention indeed, if by Miſinterpretations, *Innuendo*'s, and ſome other Arts in which they are expert, they cou'd not make themſelves believe ſo. There is no Author but may be taken in a wrong Senſe, eſpecially by thoſe who judg before they read. This Book is not fit to be read. Why ſo? I heard ſo from a very learned honeſt Man. Beſides, I don't like the Title, and the Preface has no Spirit in it, and the Stile is faulty. Again, it's an ill Book. Pray, for what Reaſon? I have no Eſteem for the Author. Why ſo? I hear he is for the new Philoſophy. However, my Teachers ſeriouſly warn'd me to be very cautious of reading him; he talks cunningly, but they tell me there's a Snake in the Graſs. Beſides, what good can be expected from Men of his Religion, Sect, Society or Party, or even

even of his Country? For did ever any good come out of *Nazareth?* He diſſents from us in Religion, and ſhall we hearken to him in Philoſophy? If he errs in one thing, he may in all. Once more; I have no great Opinion of this Book. Pray, Sir, your Reaſon. It's written by an obſcure Author, I never heard his Learning much talk'd of; I know the Man, and cou'd never obſerve any thing extraordinary in his Converſation. It's very ſtrange indeed how this Carpenter's Son ſhou'd acquire all this Knowledg. You can't imagine how unpromiſing his Countenance, Diſcourſe, Behaviour, Gate, Dreſs, and every thing obſervable about him is. Chap. 7.

He's ſomething paſſionate; and wants the Wit
To taſte a Converſation ſo polite;
Ungraceful in his Motions, and ill dreſt;
And for his Clothes, his Perſon's made a Jeſt.

See Hor. l. 1. Sat. 3.

It's almoſt incredible, yet very true, that ſuch ridiculous pitiful Pretences and Prejudices, as theſe mention'd, of which a multitude of more Inſtances might be given, are what intirely and abſolutely governs the greateſt part of Mankind, in forming a Judgment concerning Books and Opinions. 'Tis as impoſſible for ſuch to judg rightly, as for a Man to ſee clearly at the bottom of the *Thames.* He can ſee ſomething, but nothing diſtinctly. Prejudices alter the Nature and Quality of every thing; that which before was a trifling Error, theſe improve into a monſtrous Abſurdity, or blaſphemous Hereſy. Prejudice changes Truth into Falſhood,

Chap. 7. hood, Strait into Crooked, White into Black. Talk to Children about Apparitions, and the next time they are in the dark they ſee them. After the ſame manner People are brought to ſee ſtrange Abſurditys, peſtilent Doctrines, helliſh Contrivances and Deſigns, in Books written purely for the Good of the Publick, and containing nothing but what is ſubſervient to that End.

If our Paſſions and Affections take part with our Prejudices, ſuch as Envy, Anger, and Hatred of our Antagoniſts; the moſt innocent and inoffenſive Opinions in the World ſhall not fail of being miſunderſtood and miſrepreſented, as the moſt damnable and odious Errors under the Sun.

Pray let none ask me, whether the Wiſe, the Learned, and the Philoſophers be guilty of theſe Prejudices: For who can be ignorant of the Eternal Feuds which are between thoſe of different Perſuaſions in Religion, between different Orders and Societys of Men, between different Academys and Univerſitys, and Men of different Studys, between Collegues and School-Fellows, the Admirers of the new Philoſophy, and thoſe who prefer the old? Who knows not the Animoſitys we have againſt thoſe who ſeem to ſlight our Learning, reject our Opinions; who don't enough admire us, as we think; or who have the Confidence to diſſent from us? But Inſtances of this kind are numberleſs.

Learned Men are, in truth, ſo far from having acquir'd the Inſenſibility of the Stoicks, that they have not the Government

and

and Moderation of the Peripateticks; and ſo 'twill always be, whilſt their Studys have not the leaſt tendency to bring them to, but to divert them from the knowledg of themſelves: Whilſt the Knowledg they hunt after is beautiful to the Sight, but of no uſe, and makes them proud, ſeldom the better or the wiſer. This is the Wiſdom which *puffs up*, 1 Cor. 8. 1. and *Solomon* ſays, *That between the Proud are perpetual Contentions*, Prov. 13. 10. And now, what think you? Are only Porters and Carmen liable to Prejudices? Chap. 7.

The moſt miſchievous and deteſtable ſort of Diſputants are ſtill behind; I mean thoſe red-hot, fiery, flaming Gentlemen, who loſe no opportunity of reviling, diſcrediting, ſlandering, belying, and (as much as in them lies) of ruining their Neighbours (if they do but diſſent from them in Opinions concerning things confeſs'd to be of an indifferent nature) in this World, and of damning them in the next; and all this under a blaſphemous pretence of Zeal for God and Religion. Theſe Wretches can't hear, talk, nor think of any thing but the horrible Hereſys of Men, far more Orthodox, and of a far more Chriſtian Spirit than themſelves. And if you don't run into the ſame Exceſs of Riot with them, in ſending your honeſt Diſſenting Neighbours to the Devil and his Angels, in the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, they'l curſe you for a *FALSE BROTHER*, a *Lukewarm Chriſtian*, an *Atheiſt*, a *Betrayer of the Church*, and what not. " In Men, ſays *Malebranch*, " of a feeble, weak Genius, if at any time " their Recher. Tom. 2. l. 5. c. 12.

Chap. 7. " their Hatred, or their Fear, be quicken'd " by an ill-grounded Zeal, 'tis hard to tell " what unjuſt, perverſe, bitter Reflections " they'll make upon Perſons and Things. " Can theſe be innocent? I tremble to men- " tion it. But it's my fixt Opinion, that " in order to bring their Minds to a right " Chriſtian Temper, as great a Miracle is " neceſſary, as that which occaſion'd St. *Paul*'s " Converſion. I ſhou'd pronounce them ab- " ſolutely without Hopes of Mercy, cou'd " any one be ſo whilſt we have to do with " infinite Power, and infinite Goodneſs."

In the laſt place, among thoſe who contend againſt Words which they don't underſtand, you may reckon thoſe Men of Buſineſs, who are not at leiſure diligently to weigh and conſider their Adverſarys Opinions; and yet won't ſeem to be ignorant of them. Thoſe alſo who in diſputing are not enough attentive, who will anſwer without hearing, or conſidering the Objection: So that oftentimes neither of the Diſputants underſtands the other; but one talks of Chalk, the other of Cheeſe. You'd think they were in Jeſt, or playing at Croſs-Queſtions.

Another ſort of verbal Contenders are they who won't underſtand their Antagoniſt's meaning. They place their *Summum Bonum*, their greateſt Happineſs in Contention and Contradiction. If you affirm, they'll deny: If you deny, they'll affirm. They hate every Opinion of which they were not the Inventors or Patrons: Like *Laco* in *Tacitus*, who was Enemy to all Counſels,

Hiſt. l. 1. c. 26.

but

but his own. Theſe will not underſtand their Adverſarys, for fear by ſo doing, they ſhou'd be forc'd to put an end to the Controverſy. The *Reſpondent* won't underſtand the *Opponent*, for fear of being forc'd to own the Falſhood of the Propoſition he has aſſerted. The *Opponent* won't underſtand the Point in Debate, leſt he ſhou'd be forc'd to believe it, or have nothing to offer againſt it. They who *envy others*, won't underſtand, for fear of being forc'd to acknowledg a Truth either found out, or defended by them, or to own our Obligations to them for that Truth: No, they'll firſt miſrepreſent him, and then give him an ill Name. They who endeavour *to render their Neighbours odious*, won't underſtand them, leſt they ſhou'd be compel'd by their own Conſciences to acknowledg that they did them an Injury, and that their raging, brutiſh Clamours againſt them were unjuſt and ill-grounded. They who condemn others without a hearing, won't underſtand them, leſt they ſhou'd be forc'd to acknowledg the Raſhneſs of their Judgment. *Schiſmaticks* won't underſtand the Orthodox and Catholick, leſt their Separation ſhou'd be prov'd groundleſs and unwarrantable. Some won't underſtand the *Diſreſpecters of the Antients*, leſt they ſhou'd find the Antients as liable to Error as the Moderns. The *Admirers of Antiquity* won't underſtand the *Moderns*, for fear of finding ſomething in them excellent and extraordinary, which to the *Antients* was utterly unknown. The *Moderns* don't care for underſtanding the *Antients*, leſt they be found Chap. 7.

Chap. 7. found to be the Inventors of little or nothing that is new. And many, *who laugh at other Mens Opinions*, won't underſtand them, leſt they themſelves ſhou'd appear ridiculous, in laughing at what was no ways ſo. They who *write Books of Controverſy* in Religion, won't underſtand their Adverſarys, leſt by ſo doing an end be put at once to their Writing and Reputation. They who *diſpute for Gain and popular Applauſe* won't underſtand their Adverſarys, for fear they ſhou'd have nothing to confute. They *who have miſunderſtood an Author*, won't underſtand him, becauſe they ſcorn to acknowledg themſelves miſtaken. Our *Contenders about Words* won't underſtand their Adverſarys, for fear of being forc'd to confeſs themſelves Triflers: Too hard a Task for Fleſh and Blood, and never done ſince *Adam!*

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The Signs of this Diſtemper of the Mind.

PERHAPS we ſhall beſtow our Pains to no ill or needleſs purpoſe, if we enquire into the Signs and Symptoms of this Evil of the Mind, that we may be prepar'd to conſider more attentively the Matter which at any time we read or hear debated, and to take more care in obſerving and detecting Logomachys wherever we find them. The firſt ſign of contending merely about Words is,

1. *When a Man, ſenſible enough in other things, ſhall oppoſe a Truth univerſally agreed to by all Mankind; 'tis probable he differs from you more in Words than in Reality.* He can't disbelieve common Principles, known and allow'd by every Man as ſoon as he hears and underſtands them. Thus, if the Stoicks affirm the moſt exquiſite Pains to be no Evils, or to have no harm in them; That a wiſe Man can't be unfortunate, tho burning to Death in *Phalaris*'s Bull: If *Stilpo* the *Megarean* deny'd that there were Men in the World: If ſome modern Philoſophers deny Fire to be hot, the Air in Winter to be cold, Snow to be white; even theſe *Virtuoſi*, tho they ſeem to be at ſuch a vaſt wide dif-

Chap. 8. ference from the reſt of Mankind, yet diſagree with us more in Words, and in the manner of expreſſing themſelves, than in any thing elſe.

2. *If any ſeem to deny a thing very eaſily underſtood, and which ſeems to you ſo clearly and unqueſtionably true, that you can't poſſibly deny it your Aſſent, nor ſo much as call it into queſtion wou'd you ever ſo feign; believe that ſuch a one does only in Words, and not really, diſagree with you.* For Reaſon is the ſame in all Men; ſo that it is impoſſible for one Man to think a Propoſition evident, and another to think it falſe, if they have a clear and juſt Notion of its Senſe and Meaning. There's nothing more falſe than that Saying of the *Academicks, That nothing has ſo certain Evidence of its being true, but what, for any thing we know, may be falſe.* And there's nothing more evident than that many things are ſo. What can be more certain than this, that it's more eaſy to talk as *Pyrrho* does, than to believe one Word he ſays? Or that he and his Followers are truly call'd *a Sect of Lyars?* If we believe St. *Auſtin*, the *Academicks* were as dogmatical and poſitive as any of the Philoſophers, and held *Plato*'s Opinions for ſo many Oracles. Only to vex and teaze the *Stoicks*, they wou'd have it that nothing cou'd be perfectly known; that thence they might prove the *Stoicks* knew nothing. Without diſpute, there are Propoſitions evident and certain; and ſuch as are evident to one, are ſo to another, if he rightly underſtands them. Some things are ſo evident, and obvious, and eaſy to be known, that one wou'd

wou'd think 'twas impoſſible there ſhou'd be any Diſputes about them; and yet there are multitudes of Controverſys even about ſuch things: An inconteſtable Proof that we diſpute about Words, oftner than we do about Things. Chap. 8.

The Truth of Axioms is ſo manifeſt and certain, that do but compare the Subject of the Propoſition with its Attribute or Predicate, and you'll be forc'd to own it whether you will or no. You can't ſo much as doubt of it. Let any one deny *that two and two make four*, or that *the Whole is greater than its Parts*; ſet them down for merry Gentlemen, who love to hear themſelves talk, but don't believe a word of what they ſay. Many Truths, as evident as theſe, are notwithſtanding made matters of Debate; particularly many *metaphyſical* Maxims, whoſe Truth is as clear as the Sun. Whence come Diſputes then? only from miſunderſtanding one another's Words.

What I ſay of Axioms, I ſay alſo of Propoſitions immediately deducible from them. For few Men are ſo blind, as not to ſee the Truth of Propoſitions, which are the neceſſary direct Conſequences of *firſt Principles*. Who does not eaſily conclude, *from its being impoſſible for the ſame thing*, at the ſame time, to be and not to be, that there can be no ſuch thing in nature as a *Round Square?* All our real Differences are about Things merely probable; for the finding out of whoſe Truth we muſt as much rely on the Report of our Senſes, as the Dictates of our Reaſon; and truſt our own and others Memorys, and

Chap. 8. argue from the Authority of fallible Men: And at the ſame time, perhaps we are much more diſpos'd to hearken to the Inſinuations of our Fancys and Paſſions, than the ſober Dictates of our Reaſon; and have more regard to what is *Profitable* or *Pleaſant*, than what is *True*. Here the Saying certainly holds, *So many men, ſo many minds.*

But what, *ſay you*, are there no Diſputes about *Things evident?* Yes, undoubtedly. But then they are about Things difficult to be known: Whoſe Truth lies a *great way off*, and muſt be brought to us by a *long Train of Conſequences*, all which every one is not capable of marſhalling in his Head, in due Rank and File, at the ſame time. Some are not vers'd enough in the Sciences; others have not Quickneſs enough of Apprehenſion: ſome have not Capacity of Mind; others are not duly attentive; or if they be at firſt, they have neither Patience nor Power to hold it long. Hence 'tis that in difficult Inquirys, ſome ſee the Truth clearly, ſome dimly, and ſome can ſee nothing of it at all. Here I wou'd recommend to you this Rule: *Whenever one, no ways inferiour to you in Parts or Learning, oppoſes what you can't but think you clearly and diſtinctly ſee to be an evident Truth; don't believe that his Sentiments are really different from yours, before you have examin'd the Controverſy over and over, in all its Branches, with a ſedate and attentive Mind.*

3. *Whenever a wiſe man, in a Diſpute, ſeems to maintain an Opinion manifeſtly abſurd and ridiculous, 'tis much if you gueſs amiſs, by thinking he contends about Words.* They who

ſearch into the Meaning of the *Holy Scriptures*, obſerve this Rule; *When the Words won't bear a proper Senſe without running us into an Abſurdity, to take up with a figurative one*; ſince nothing unreaſonable can be juſtly attributed to the Fountain of Wiſdom. Chap. 8.

I don't ſay but the wiſeſt Men may be miſtaken; but then we ought to have ſo much regard for them, as not to think that at every turn they doat, rave, and are out of their Wits. If that of *Carteſius* looks like a Paradox, That "nothing is more equally divi-"ded amongſt Men than a good Mind:" Thus much however we may grant, *That Reaſon and a good Underſtanding are not our Peculiar; but that others alſo have their* Portion *and* Share *of it*. So when *Cicero* ſays, "There's "nothing ſo abſurd but what has been aſſert-"ed by ſome of the Philoſophers," let it paſs for a *Rhetorical Hyperbole*.

Let us imitate the Criticks, who in correcting an Author, if they find any Words which are obſcure, or faint, and without Spirit and Emphaſis; tho the Reading agree with the moſt antient Copys, yet they won't believe it genuine, but ſubſtitute Words of Life and Vigour in their places. We ſhou'd do like the *Expounders* of *Riddles*, who diligently examine every Word, that they mayn't miſs of one Ambiguity. Stones, ſays one, don't *grow* in *Switzerland*. No, ſays our cunning Spark, nothing grows without Nouriſhment; but, Sir, they are augmented, increas'd and inlarg'd. *Plato* ſays, "The Ideas "of all Things are Eternal:" But do's he ſay that theſe Ideas, as diſtinct and ſeparated,

Chap. 8. not only from the things themſelves of which they are Ideas, but alſo from the *Divine Intellect*, exiſted eternally? If he do's, that moſt Elegant Writer *Rapin*, has reaſon to ſay, "That theſe ſeparate Ideas are ſo abſurd, "that it is impoſſible to think how they "cou'd enter into the Thoughts of ſo great "a Philoſopher as *Plato*". The ſame Philoſopher repreſents *Socrates* inſtructing *Alcibiades*, "That the Soul only is the Man; and "that the Body is as much diſtinguiſh'd from "it, as its Inſtrument, as the Butcher is "from his Knife". *Varro* asks, whether they be as different as the *Horſeman* and the *Horſe*; yet if we imagine *Plato* thought there was no cloſer Tye between the Soul of a Man and his Body, than there is between the Butcher and his Knife, or the Horſe-man and his Horſe, certainly we ſhall do him a piece of Injuſtice; he cou'd never think at ſo wild a rate. And, how ſilly wou'd he be who ſhou'd go about to confute ſuch an Opinion as this? Don't pretend to prove againſt the Peripateticks, that there is no *Horror of Nature*; That no *Appetite* or *Deſire* may be attributed to *Matter* and the *Elements*: For they don't uſe, nor intend their Words in a proper literal ſenſe. Thus, when *Carteſius* ſays, That God is poſitively from himſelf, you ought not to believe that a Chriſtian Philoſopher in his right Senſes can entertain ſuch an abſurd ſelf-contradicting Notion as that of God's *being*, before he *had a Being*; that he produced himſelf; and whilſt he was yet *Non-exiſtent*, caus'd himſelf *to exiſt*. Let none here object to us our Enthuſiaſms,

Coll. Ariſt. & Plat.

Whims

Whims and Freaks in Religion; ſome will be *fooliſh and vain in their Imaginations* in all Societys and Conditions of Men; ſo were the Heathens. But if you charge any groſs Abſurditys on ſuch as *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Ariſtotle* or *Zeno*, you are in the wrong: They undoubtedly err'd in many things, but then 'twas with Wit and Subtilty; the greateſt part of their Writings and Opinions were ſuch as might be expected from the greateſt Men deſtitute of the Light of the Holy Scriptures. And as for the *Ægyptians*, tho the Common People, who knew little or nothing of their *Symbolical* Theology, nor the Meaning of the *Hieroglyphicks*, were conſequently over-run with Barbariſm and Superſtition; the Wiſe and Learned amongſt them were free from it, and had as little Reſpect for their God *Serapis*, as *Jews* have for Bread made a God by Tranſubſtantiation. Chap. 8.

4. *If any aſcribe to his Adverſary, who in other things is quick and apprehenſive enough, an Opinion agreeable with his preſent Deſign, but which manifeſtly claſhes with ſome other of his avow'd Opinions; it's a ſhrewd Sign that the Diſagreement ariſes from the Miſunderſtanding and Miſapplication of ſome particular Words or Expreſſions.* Hence nothing more frequent in Books of Controverſy than, *Sir, You are repugnant with your ſelf; You contradict what you aſſerted in ſuch a place of your Writings.*

Theſe Accuſations are ſeldom well laid, when charg'd upon Men of Conſideration and Judgment. Their Words may ſeem to be repugnant, when their Opinions are uni-

Chap. 8. form and all of a piece. Pray obſerve, that I here ſpeak of thoſe Opinions which are founded on and infer'd from *Rational Principles:* not ſuch as we believe on account of the Authority of others, or becauſe we think we remember the Matter of Fact with all its Circumſtances, for here the wiſeſt Men ſometimes forget themſelves. 'Tis not ſo in Arts and Sciences, where one Propoſition depends upon, and is cloſely connected with another. Here, it's true, Men of Judgment may err, but they can't ſo eaſily be inconſiſtent with themſelves; ſo that we ſhou'd not raſhly aſcribe to Men of Accuracy, Doctrines abſolutely deſtructive of the Hypotheſis which they maintain.

Plato, ſays *Cicero*, in his *Timæus* and Book of Laws, affirms "that the World is God, "as alſo the Heaven, Stars, Earth, *&c.*" But muſt we aſcribe this to *Plato* in the literal Meaning of the Words? Is it poſſible that he ſhou'd here talk ſo abſurdly of the Supreme Being, who in other places talks ſo orthodoxly? God, ſays *Plato* in *Plutarch*, is a Spirit, a diſtinct and ſeparate Form, without mixture with any Matter, and obnoxious to none of the Paſſions; and *Cicero* himſelf, ſpeaking of *Plato*, ſays, That the *Grecians* deny'd God to have a Body. The ſame Opinion is conſtantly aſcrib'd to *Plato*; ſo that when he ſeems to ſay what *Cicero* objects againſt him, he muſt either ſpeak according to the Sentiments of others, or *Tully* miſunderſtands him.

Many are greatly offended with ſome of our Politicians, for affirming *that Princes are*

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ſo much above Law that they are not oblig'd by any: That *conſequently they can't do amiſs, or act illegally, but may do as they pleaſe.* Theſe are perhaps crude Expreſſions; but then thus much may be ſaid in behalf of theſe Politicians, that above all things they recommend to their Princes the Love of Religion in themſelves, and the Encouragement of it in their Subjects; and the ſtrict and conſtant Exerciſe of Juſtice, Clemency, and all the other Virtues; and threatning them with the greateſt Severity of Divine Vengeance, if they act contrary to the Duty and Dignity of their Stations, for this very Reaſon, That they are UNACCOUNTABLE, and their Perſons not liable to be try'd by our Courts of Judicature, as Subjects are. Chap. 8.

5. *If any in a Controverſy charges his Adverſary with a very abſurd ſhameful Opinion, ſeemingly agreeable enough with ſome of his Expreſſions, but to which his Life and Practice have been one continued conſtant Contradiction; 'tis much if this be not occaſion'd by a Logomachy.* Phyſicians, as has been obſerv'd, often differ about the Nature of a Diſtemper, yet agree in their Preſcriptions; a certain Sign of their differing about Words.

The beſt Interpreter of many of the Philoſophers Sayings is their Practice. *Laertius* informs us, 'twas *Pyrrho*'s Opinion, that *nothing was good or evil, juſt or unjuſt by Nature*; 'twas only Cuſtom made them ſo: An impious Expreſſion no doubt, and deſtructive of all common Honeſty! But was *Pyrrho* ſuch a Beaſt as to aſſert this? without Diſpute, if we may believe the ſame *Laertius*, who adds,

Chap. 8. adds, That there's nothing in the Aſſertion but what was exactly agreeable with his Life and Practice.

But what ſhall we ſay of *Epicurus?* Oh, thinks an unthinking Spark, he's a gallant Philoſopher! I love Philoſophy; not that which conſiſts in airy Speculations, but which is delicious and palatable: They think of no Company in *Epicurus*'s Gardens, but ſuch jolly boon Companions as *Apicius:* That inſtead of Books, Pen, Ink and Paper, there's nothing to be ſeen but Tables cover'd with all manner of Varietys and Daintys, and Bottles of the moſt rich and generous Wines. If *Epicurus* were alive, and theſe to viſit him, how ſadly wou'd they be diſappointed in their Entertainment! Ask *Laertius* what was ordinarily his *Bill of Fare* every Day, he'll inform you 'twas nothing but *coarſe Bread and Water.* But then our Maſter of Pleaſure far'd more ſumptuouſly on gay Days and Feſtivals? Why truly here you'll be deceiv'd again, if you promiſe your ſelf any thing like a *Vitellian Banquet:* Here are none of your Thouſands of Fiſhes and Birds; nor the Livers, Brains, Tongues and Entrails of Stares, Pheaſants and Peacocks, the beautiful Birds call'd *Phœnicopters,* and Lampreys. What then? Hear out of *Laertius* what he writes for; "Pray, ſays he to his Friend, "ſend me a little Cytheridian Cheeſe, be-"cauſe I deſign to regale ſome Friends with a "very handſome ſplendid Banquet." But perhaps *Epicurus*'s Word is not to be taken. Hear then what *Seneca* ſays, "When any "approaches *Epicurus*'s Gardens, and ſees the "In-

lib. 10.

Laert. ib.

Ep. 21.

" Inſcription, Come in Sir, You are very welcome, here's Pleaſure for your Entertainment, the greateſt Good Man is capable of enjoying: You'll find an honeſt Maſter of the Family, extremely hoſpitable and ſincerely kind: He'll entertain you with very good Barley-Cakes, and as much clear Spring-Water as you pleaſe to drink, and will take what Care he can to convince you that you are very welcome." Many wou'd think it very hard to live ſuch an abſtemious Life, who notwithſtanding are always clamouring and declaiming againſt *Epicurus* and the *Epicureans*. If any who liv'd in extreme Poverty, in the ſtricteſt Temperance, yet with the greateſt Content, ſhou'd publiſh an Opinion that Riches were the Chief Good; I ſhou'd preſently be inclin'd to think that he underſtood the word *Riches* in another ſenſe than we generally do. The ſame I judg of *Epicurus* when he uſes the word *Pleaſure*: It's the moſt improbable Suppoſition in the World, if it be not impoſſible, that a Man ſhou'd live ſo ſtrictly as he liv'd, and have ſuch looſe licentious Principles, as it's generally believ'd he had. I wiſh our Divines wou'd more frequently judg of Mens Opinions by their conſtant Practices: Did they follow this Method, they wou'd not ſo often injure their Neighbours out of Conſcience, and ſet whole Kingdoms and Commonwealths in a Flame, under a Pretence of *Preſerving the Church.* Chap. 8.

6. *When in a Controverſy the Diſputants prove both the affirmative and negative Part of the Queſtion by the ſame Arguments, it ſeldom fails but*

Chap. 8. *but the Queſtion in debate is either wrong put or miſunderſtood*; for knowing acute Men can't but ſee the Tendency of an Argument, eſpecially if the Conſequence be eaſy and clear: And therefore when an Argument is retorted upon them, there's generally ſome Miſunderſtanding in the Caſe. Two *Oppoſites* can't be prov'd by the ſame Argument, therefore thoſe ſeemingly contrary Propoſitions can't be *Oppoſites*, nor contrary. To give an Inſtance:

Claudius Salmaſius and *Daniel Heinſius*, two bright Ornaments of the laſt Age, held a mighty Controverſy concerning the *Helleniſtick* Language; whether the *Septuagint* Verſion of the Old Teſtament, and the New Teſtament, were written in that peculiar Language, or Dialect, call it as you pleaſe, or no? No, ſays *Salmaſius*: I beg your Pardon, ſays *Heinſius*. Well, Partys were made, and ſharp Books written on both ſides; but a Paſſage worth reading is *Salmaſius*'s Concluſion of his Book, which he calls *the Funeral of the Helleniſtick Language*. He introduces *Heinſiolus* (as he ridiculouſly calls his Adverſary, the great *Heinſius*) as the *Phœnicle* (not the *Phœnix* you may aſſure your ſelf) of the Age, the *Regaliolus* (forſooth) or *Little Wren* of the Learned; and the *Luſciniola*, or *little Nightingale* (by the way one wou'd think Wrens and Nightingales ſmall enough without the Epithet *little*) I ſay, the *little Nightingale* of Eloquence, inconſolable, and ſighing in mournful Notes the Loſs, not of *Hylas* nor *Hermegardes*, but of his Daughter, that Dear and Lovely Girl, his chief and only Delight,

Delight, nam'd *Helleniſticula* (again with your *Diminutives!*) violently raviſh'd from him by the *Great Salmaſius*, tho leſs, it ſeems, than little *Heinſius*. Can any thing in the World be more ridiculous, more pedantick, more rude, more ungentlemanlike, or more provoking than this canting, inſulting Rhapſody of *Salmaſius?* And what was all this for? Truly, beſides the Digreſſions, ſuch as References to the *Jewiſh*, *Grecian* and *Roman* Antiquitys, Conſiderations of ſome Places of Scripture, and other Writers; all that's left is a mere *Noiſe about nothing*, a pitiful *Logomachy*. They who ſay that the Language in which the Septuagint and New Teſtament are written is the *Helleniſtick*, mean by it a Language that's not purely Greek, but partly patch'd up with *Hebraiſms*, *Syriaſms* and *Chaldaiſms*: That ſuch is the Greek of the Septuagint and New Teſtament, is paſt all Diſpute. Pray what does *Salmaſius* and his Followers ſay to this? Why, that theſe *Helleniſms* are not a *Language*, pray obſerve; conſequently not an *Helleniſtick* Language, but a mere Device. Well, what's all this to the purpoſe, *Great*, *High and Mighty Monſieur?* Your Adverſarys will allow you to call it an *Hebraiſtick*, *Exhelleniſtick*, *Aphelleniſtick* Language, or Dialect if you pleaſe, or what elſe you pleaſe, they won't ſtand with you about a Word. Oh! but ſays *ſhrewd Salmaſius*, I have gain'd my Point; for if what you call ſo be not the *Helleniſtick Language*, by your own Confeſſion the Septuagint Tranſlation and New Teſtament can't be written in the *Helleniſtick Language*.

Chap. 8.

Chap. 8. *Language.* What egregious Trifling was this about Words!

7. *Moſt of the Diſputes concerning Definitions and Diviſions are mere Logomachys.* For (not to inſiſt, that theſe Diſputes are but about the Method and Manner of treating the Sciences, which is a kind of contending about Words) Definitions are either *Nominal* or *Real*. In *real* Definitions, or Definitions of the *thing it ſelf*, we regard more its Regularity and Conformity to the Precepts of Logicians, than we do its Truth. This Definition is ſomewhat obſcure; add this Word, 'twill be much clearer and more intelligible. By no means; 'twill then be too long by two, if not three Syllables. In one Definition there's a ſad Complaint, there's no *Genus* to be found: And in another, he's a mere Stranger, he claims Kindred of the reſt of the Words in the Definition, but not one Soul will own him. Lamentable Caſes! One defines *Logick*, the *Art of thinking aright*. And why *aright?* ſays another; is it not included in the word Art? *Grammar is the Art of ſpeaking well.* Yes, and *Writing* too, ſays another. Your Pardon, ſays the firſt. How ridiculous is it to bring *Copulatives* and *Disjunctives* into Definitions?

To diſpute about *nominal* Definitions, is certainly to contend about Words. But there are multitudes of theſe which paſs for Definitions of the *Thing* it ſelf, and not of the *Name*. I define a Cauſe to be, *a Principle diſtinct from that of which it is a Principle*: You'll define it otherwiſe perhaps; I'm content. But according to my Definition, *Mat-*

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ter and *Form* can't be reckon'd two *Cauſes* of *Body*; one being only *mentally*, the other *modally* diſtinguiſh'd from Body. And what harm is there if they be not? Is there any Injury done to the Commonwealth? But neither are they Parts of a Body, if you define a Part rightly, when you ſay, *'Tis a thing really diſtinct from every other thing of the ſame* whole *to which it belongs*. I confeſs theſe Definitions will deprive Matter and Form of ſome Titles of Honour, but the Principles of Body will be never a whit the leſs noble. Chap. 8.

You tell me my Definition of Motion is very faulty, becauſe it only agrees with *local Motion*. And ſuppoſe I be minded to define only *Local Motion*, or to call nothing *Motion* but what is *Local*, what ill Conſequence can you infer from hence? Conſequence! Why, mercy upon us! at this rate *Generation*, *Corruption*, *Augmentation*, *Diminution*, *Alteration*, won't be *Motions*. Pray dear Good Sir, don't be out of Patience, or out of Heart; inſtead of their old names given them by their Godfather *Ariſtotle*, they ſhall have as new, pretty, modiſh, and faſhionable a name given them as you can wiſh.

Not leſs trifling are the Diſputes concerning the Diviſions of Things: As when the Debate is, Whether Being or Entity be more properly diſtributed into ten Categorys, or two, or three? Whether it be better to divide *Magnitude* into a *Line*, and a thing *delineated*; and then the thing *delineated* into Surface and Body? Or to divide it immediately into *Line*, *Surface* and Body? Whether there be five Senſes, or, as *Scaliger* will have it,

Chap. 8. it, ſix, or more; according to their Notion, who won't allow *Touching* or *Feeling* to be a ſingle Senſe, but to be diverſify'd by the variety of its Objects? Whether there be only two ſorts of *Plants*, according to *Moſes*'s Diviſion of them into *Trees* and *Herbs*; or three, *Trees*, *Shrubs*, and *Herbs*; or four, *Trees*, *Shrubs*, *Herbs*, and *Garden-Herbs* fit for Food; and whether a fifth ſort may be allow'd, ſuch as *Muſhrooms*, *Puffs*, &c. I fancy at a Feaſt, a Man, who was very hungry, wou'd ſoon grow very angry, to hear the Carvers diſpute into how many Fragments this *Joint of Meat*, or that *Sturgeon* ſhou'd be divided; and of the beſt manner of cutting up this *Hare*, or that *Pullet*, till he had quite loſt his Appetite. And is it not great pity that Men, ſo earneſtly deſirous of Truth, ſhou'd be ſo long hinder'd from the Sight and Knowledg of it, by, I don't ſay needleſs ſilly Diſtinctions, but by long, uſeleſs Controverſys about them? when Diviſions may be *arbitrary*, if no conſiderable part be omitted.

8. *If any one be very tenacious of ſome general Expreſſions, which either ſignify nothing diſtinctly, or admit of divers ſignifications: if, when deſir'd to explain them, he heſitates, and can't or won't find out plainer Words to expreſs himſelf by; but will have his own to be ſo clear, that you can't well miſunderſtand him: Diſputes with ſuch are generally merely verbal Contentions.* Some imagine if a Word be common, it muſt of conſequence be clear and ſignificant, tho it be ever ſo confus'd and indiſtinct. If they think they underſtand themſelves, they won't ſuppoſe but you underſtand

derſtand them as well. And perhaps you do: for ask them the meaning of this and that Word, and the determin'd Senſe in which they uſe it; they can't give you a ready Anſwer, but will be very angry at your Impertinence in asking Queſtions about Words ſo very plain and uſual. And you can by no means perſuade them to omit for the preſent a Word liable to exception; if they do this, they can *hold forth* no longer. If theſe Men are zealous for *Liberty*, the word *Liberty* is in their mouths on every occaſion. If their Superiours do any thing contrary to their Inclinations and particular Intereſts, it's an Infringement of their *Liberty*: if they act any thing indecently, they are privileg'd to do ſo by their *Liberty*. Ask them the particular Senſe in which they take the Word, they won't take it well of you. Chap. 8.

But you go on; Do you mean the Liberty of the *Community*, or of *ſingle Perſons?* If the latter, do you mean a *Freedom from all Subjection*, or from ſome certain *troubleſom or chargeable Dutys*, to which your Subjection renders you obnoxious? A few ſuch Queſtions as theſe will make them quite out of Patience with you. *What, don't you know what Liberty is? You are not fit to be talk'd with.* Some are very earneſt for the Reſtitution of their *Rights* and *Privileges*, who can't name one but what they enjoy. But they think in general theſe Words ſignify ſome very great and excellent thing, which if they were once in poſſeſſion of, they ſhou'd be wonderfully happy.

Chap. 8. Here let it be obſerv'd, that an obſtinate adherence to obſcure and ambiguous Words, is a ſign of a Mind fond of contending about Words: but that, on the other hand, there are ſome who will not be ſatisfy'd with the plaineſt Words. Thus the *Arians* cou'd by no means underſtand Ὁμούσιος, a word ſignifying *one of the ſame Eſſence*; not becauſe 'twas obſcure, but becauſe 'twas too plain and eaſy to be underſtood.

9. *If two diſpute about a Propoſition, of which you have a very clear and diſtinct Perception; but at the ſame time you apprehend the Meaning, Drift and Deſign of the Arguments of neither the one nor the other: you may be pretty certain that they diſpute merely about Words.* For if you, who calmly conſider what is offer'd on both hands, underſtand neither; how ſhou'd they, who, in the heat of Diſputation, conſider more what they themſelves have to ſay, than what their Adverſarys ſay or have ſaid, be thought more intelligent? Beſides, the *Hope* of Victory, and the *Shame* of being outdone (which Conſiderations can't but at ſuch a Juncture, and on ſuch an Occaſion, diſtract their Thoughts in ſome degree) muſt needs be a means, not at all of *illuminating* the Underſtanding, but of rendring it *dark* and *confus'd*. But let it be obſerv'd, that the Rule holds good, when the Debate is about a *Theſis*, in an *Art* or *Science*, which you know equally well with either of the Diſputants; which I wou'd alſo have well remember'd, when we come to ſpeak of the other Signs of Controverſys being merely about Words. For to the ignorant many things

things are *obſcure* and *inextricable*, which to the Learned appear with all the Clearneſs imaginable. One thing more I wou'd have obſerv'd, that the four laſt Signs of a Diſputation's being merely about Words, is principally apply'd to thoſe Debates in our Academys, where *Reſpondent* and *Opponent* ſpeak audibly *Face to Face*. I ſhall add no Examples, they being eaſily taken notice of, and every day obvious to the *intelligent* and *conſiderate* Reader. Chap. 8.

10. *If notwithſtanding your Attention, and perfect Knowledg of the Theſis debated, you can't underſtand the Argument which the Opponent brings to invalidate its Truth; it's a Sign of a Logomachy.* For many times the Opponent offers his Arguments againſt a Propoſition, only with a general Deſign of ſaying ſomething, before he has well conſider'd what is proper to be ſaid, and really for his purpoſe. No wonder if in ſuch a Caſe, which often happens, that you don't underſtand the Objection, when the Opponent himſelf has not a clear Notion of it. The Reſpondent fights with a ſhadow, has either no Enemy, or one not ſufficiently provided with Arms: He begins the Combat with a mighty Noiſe, and that's the main of his Artillery: His Piſtols are charg'd with Gunpouder enough, but there's never a Bullet in them; they give a great Report without doing the leaſt Execution, and may put a faint-hearted Man in a fear, but can do no other miſchief.

11. *If in a Diſputation, you apprehend very well, both the Propoſition debated, and the Argument of the Opponent againſt it; but, with all*

Chap. 8. *your Attention, can't underſtand the Defence of the Reſpondent; you may reaſonably ſuſpect, that the Remainder of the Diſpute will prove a mere Logomachy.* For this is often an infallible ſign, that the Reſpondent can ſee nothing exceptionable in the Opponent's Argument: He muſt not ſay nothing, nor poorly give up the Cauſe; his wiſeſt way is therefore to puzzle the Opponent with hard words, which neither he himſelf, nor any Mortal beſides can underſtand. If you can't fairly beat your Adverſary, throw Duſt in his Eyes. Ply him with unintelligible, inſignificant Words; you'll quickly tire him at leaſt with Sounds without Senſe, and Words without Meaning.

12. *If in a Diſputation, after you have for ſome time very well underſtood both Reſpondent and Opponent, on a ſudden a Miſt ariſes, and you underſtand neither; you may well conclude, that all the Remainder of their Diſputation will be a Contention about Words.* This is the misfortune of almoſt all Diſputations, where the Conteſt is not ſo much for Truth, as Victory. In the beginning you eaſily obſerve Perſpicuity and Order: The Arguments, Replys, and Inſtances are all oppoſite, and intelligible. You ſee the Diſputants, and keep them company a long time; when on a ſudden they are vaniſh'd, and quite loſt. You can ſee neither of them; nor they, fighting in perfect Darkneſs, can't be well ſuppos'd to ſee one another; ſo that their Arguments muſt needs be merely blind *Logomachys*.

To theſe Signs of a Controverſy's or a Diſputation's being about Words, you may add what was ſaid before concerning the Cauſes

ſes of Logomachys; Cauſes being the Signs of their Effects, as Clouds are of Rain. I wou'd not have any think theſe Signs equally certain or infallible; or that any, finding one or more of theſe Signs in a Debate, ſhou'd preſently conclude it a Logomachy without farther examination. No; before he pretends to paſs a Judgment, let him in the firſt place be ſure to underſtand the Opinion of both Diſputants, and then compare them together with all the Exactneſs and Diligence he is maſter of. By this time he may make a pretty certain Judgment. His Opinion of the Debate, before ſuch Examination, cou'd be grounded only on Probabilitys. Chap. 8.

CHAP. IX.

The Remedys againſt this Evil.

AMONG other Remedys againſt this Evil, whether it be proper to preſcribe *Hellebore*, merely from the Authority of *Carneades*, I am not over-confident. If that Herb has ſo much Virtue in it as to clear the Underſtanding of all its Prejudices, and the Mind of its fond Deſire of Vain-glory: If it be an infallible Help againſt Anger, Hatred, Envy, Party-taking, the Love of Quarrelling, unjuſt Suſpicions, and Zeal without either Knowledg or Charity: If it be good to ſettle fickle and volatile Wits; to reduce wandring Thoughts; and to clear the Sight of our Underſtandings, that it may diſcern the Nature and Propertys of Things thro the Diſguiſes and Miſrepreſentations of Words: If Hellebore, I ſay, has ſo much Virtue in it, it's certainly a very ſovereign Medicine, an excellent, I had almoſt ſaid a never-failing Remedy againſt the Diſtemper under conſideration. *Carneades* and many of the Antients us'd it for theſe Purpoſes; but I don't thorowly underſtand the Nature of Herbs, and therefore will not turn Mountebank. In this Chapter I ſhall treat of ſuch Remedys as are good for the *Cure* of the Diſtemper; in the next, which will be the laſt, of thoſe which

which are of uſe to preſerve us from it. And, Chap. 9.

1. An excellent Means of deſtroying all Logomachys at once, Root and Branch, wou'd be an *Univerſal Dictionary*, compos'd by a Man, or rather Men of very clear Heads, quick-ſighted in diſcovering, and acute in diſcerning the Opinions of the Learned; and who are diligent and ready, and able to teach them to others in a plain and natural Method. They ſhou'd inſert and explain *Alphabetically* all Words and Forms of ſpeaking which have occaſion'd Logomachys: They ſhou'd put a diſtinct Mark upon ſuch Words as are of *no Signification*, thoſe of an *uncertain*, thoſe of a *various* and *unconſtant*, and thoſe of a *confus'd* Signification: All Words which have a *certain*, *conſtant*, and *diſtinct* Signification, ſhou'd have a Place there, ſhou'd be exactly and clearly defin'd, and Examples ſhou'd be added to illuſtrate the Definition: And notice ſhou'd be given if theſe Words be us'd by any Authors in an uncertain, unconſtant and confus'd Senſe; for Words us'd by the Learned in a certain limited Senſe, will, when they fall into vulgar Mouths, have their Senſe alter'd and deprav'd, and their Signification mutilated or enlarg'd.

Such a Lexicon wou'd be of unſpeakable Advantage to the Learned World, both for the underſtanding of the Arts and Sciences, and the Diminution, at leaſt, if not the utter Deſtruction of all Contending about Words: 'Twou'd be an Undertaking worthy of the Learned Age we live in, which, above all that have preceded it, has with the greateſt

Chap. 9. Induſtry arm'd themſelves againſt the Cheats of unintelligible Cant, and has had the moſt generous and ardent Ambition of acquiring a clear and diſtinct Knowledg of Things. If the Work be too great for a few, let it be diſtributed amongſt many: Let one be confin'd to the Conſideration of one Art, and another to that of another Science: Or rather, let this Man be at the pains to examine one Author, and that *another*, whoſe Words and Expreſſions have, thro their own or their Reader's fault, occaſion'd Diſputes about Words. To give an Inſtance, let one Gentleman take in hand the Works of *Renatus Deſcartes*, pick out all thoſe Words of which his Adverſarys complain; then range them in *Alphabetical Order*, explain and define them clearly, and without the leaſt Ambiguity, according to the Senſe of the Author: Let the ſame be done by other Authors, and many Indexes collected into one body, will finiſh and compleat the *Univerſal Dictionary* we ſpeak of.

2. Another means of putting a ſtop, if not an end to theſe Contentions about Words, wou'd be *to clear the Arts and Sciences, not only of all thoſe words which either have none, or a very uncertain, or confus'd Signification*, (theſe are a perpetual occaſion of Logomachys) *but of thoſe alſo which by their leſſer Clearneſs and Perſpicuity adminiſter Fewel to Diſputations, which, expreſs'd in plainer words, wou'd ſoon vaniſh into ſmoak*; eſpecially thoſe which were invented for no other reaſon than for increaſing the number of Diſputes, for obſcuring things eaſy to be underſtood, with

with hard unheard-of Names; for conceal- Chap. 9.
ing the Ignorance of the Inventors, and for raiſing them in the eſteem of the Vulgar. *Stephanus Gauſſenus* ſpeaking of the Queſtion, Whether Theology be an *Art* or *Science?* ſays it's a Logomachy. Wou'd you ſee this Truth with your naked Eyes? Why then, lay aſide for a little time thoſe equivocal Words, *Art*, *Science*, *Sapience*; and enquire into the nature of *Theology*, without calling it by this or that Name; and then conſider our modern Diſputants, and you'll find 'em agree entirely in the main Points, and diſagree in little, if any thing, but Words, the fatal reigning Evil of our Age!

I wou'd by no means be ſo moroſe and ill-natur'd as not to tolerate even the School-Terms, thoſe of them which are *ſignificant*, and have met with the *univerſal Approbation* of the Learned: But let them be tolerated on this condition, that they live amicably and friendly, and don't at every turn break the Peace and commit Diſorders; let ſuch be baniſh'd the Commonwealth. Some wou'd recommend them to us by ſaying, They often expreſs more in twenty words than we can, by our common Diſcourſe, in ſo many Lines. But I ſay, it's better to expreſs that in many words, which many underſtand, than to expreſs in few words what ſcarce one underſtands: It's better to uſe ten words which require no words to explain them, than two or three which require a thouſand. There are Philoſophers in our days, who in Books of no prodigious bulk, have, without the aſſiſtance of the Schoolmen, comprehended more

Chap. 9. more than is perhaps in all their Volumes put together. But you'll ſay, it's a difficult Task to quit the School-Terms; it's impoſſible to perſuade the *Scotiſts* and *Thomiſts* to part with thoſe Delicacys.

Hor. L. 2. Ep. 1.

Either becauſe they learnedly diſcard
All Truths but what are to their Notions ſquar'd;
Or judg, if Juniors ſhou'd their Wiſdom teach,
It wou'd their Ignorance, in Years, impeach;
And bluſh, the Man ingenuouſly ſhou'd own
That all was Stuff, the Boy had ſwallow'd down.

Let every one do as much towards it as he can, and carefully abſtain from all ambiguous Words; give an inſtance that Philoſophy may be without them, and inculcate as much to his *Diſciples* and *Pupils*. If ſuch Words are propos'd to him, let him not be aſham'd to own that he does not underſtand them, or think it diſhonourable to ask the Meaning of them: If every one took this Courſe, every one wou'd be compel'd to ſpeak ſo as to be underſtood. Learned Men have made no inconſiderable Advances towards ſpeaking and writing plainly and intelligibly. We begin to be inquiſitive after the Senſe of every Word, and have almoſt forgot to admire *Nonſenſical Jargon:* Nor are we aſham'd to make profeſſion of our Ignorance of thoſe Words which our Authors themſelves ſeem not well to underſtand; our modern Philoſophers have approv'd themſelves Interpreters of Truth and Nature, not of Words.

3. *'Twou'd very much diminiſh the number of Contentions about Words, if Men wou'd give over writing*

writing againſt one another's Perſons, and enter into no other Conſideration than that of the Opinions their Antagoniſts maintain'd. Did we write not ſo much againſt Men, Books and Partys, as purely againſt their Errors, we ſhou'd not ſo often contend merely about Words. The Opinion we endeavour to confute, is moſt times really repugnant to our Sentiments of things; but when our Aim is, not ſo much to ſhew the weakneſs of the erroneous Opinion, as of the Perſon who maintains it, 'tis much if we eſcape a Fallacy of Words. A Perſon who labours to prove *Deſcartes* a Sceptick, may, by miſunderſtanding his Words, wrong both his own Judgment and the other's Reputation; but if he can diſprove that *Scepticiſm*, which he imagines to be the Conſequence of *Deſcartes*'s Opinions, without perſonal Reflections, he will do ſomething worthy of a man's Notice. Chap. 9.

But, ſay you, the Opinion of this Man, that Author, or ſuch a Sect, is wicked and impious. What then? Diſprove that wicked, impious Opinion: Spare it not, but bring your ſtrongeſt Arguments againſt it; and no body, but they who have a very fond Conceit of their own Opinions, will find fault with you. What neceſſity is there of charging one with this Opinion, another with that, when they both perhaps diſclaim the one and the other? But young Men are to be caution'd againſt certain Authors, Books and Factions. I'm of your mind; they ought not only to be warn'd, but arm'd againſt them: but let it be with the ſound, ſubſtantial Knowledg of the Truth, and undeniable Arguments, and not with perſonal Prejudices,

and

Chap. 9. and Invectives againſt Books they never read, and Men whoſe Principles they never conſider'd nor underſtood. We render Truth it ſelf ſuſpected, when we go about to defend it by the ſame Arts which People uſe, when they wou'd trick, deceive and abuſe us. One good Property young Men have, many of them, that they ſeldom fail of reading, and carefully examining a Book which they ſee cenſur'd, or threatned to be ſuppreſs'd. On this very account the *Carteſian* Philoſophy is much more oblig'd to its Enemys than its Friends, for its being ſo univerſally read as it has been throughout the civiliz'd part of the World. Let us therefore contend againſt *Errors*, rather than thoſe whom we judg *Erroneous*, and prefer Truth before Reputation and a great Name: But, we have a certain Malignity in our Temper, which makes us ſour and ill-natur'd. Thus 'tis not enough to ſay, *God is not from himſelf poſitively, ſo as to be the Author of his own Being*; this is flat and inſipid; there's no Spirit nor Life in it: Ill-will muſt go farther, and ſeek an Author for the Opinion; then he's in his Element, and thus he begins: *Deſcartes*, that Blaſphemer of God, has the Impudence to ſay that *God is poſitively from himſelf*; as tho he himſelf had produc'd himſelf, and ſo *was, before he was.*

4. *A good way to leſſen the number of Logomachys wou'd be, to diſpute not ſo much of general Ideas, as of the ſeveral Species or Kinds of Things; and to deſcend from Univerſals to thoſe Notions of Things which are more particular and diſtinct.* The Marks by which we diſtinguiſh general Notions from one another, are not

ſo

ſo manifeſt and legible as thoſe which are ſtamp'd upon Words of a more determin'd and limited Signification. Hence 'tis that moſt Diſputes concerning the Sciences relate to the *General* Parts of *Phyſicks* and *Metaphyſicks*, for example, and to the *Prolegomena*. When we come to Particulars, Controverſys will ceaſe; and Logomachys will leſſen, if not wholly vaniſh. Chap. 9.

Beſides, we often uſe Words in a more confin'd and narrow Senſe than our Antagoniſt does; ſo that he does not underſtand us clearly. This ſets us to Diſputing; which will be ſoon over, if we don't wander up and down, and loſe our ſelves in the *Terra Incognita* of *General* and *Abſtracted* Notions, but come directly to the particular Point in debate. *Changes in a Kingdom or Commonwealth are of dangerous Conſequence*, ſays one: No, ſays t'other. How now ſhall we reconcile theſe two People? Very well, when they come to explain themſelves: For, one talks of changing the *eſſential* Form of our Government, the repealing our Laws, Cuſtoms, and antient Statutes, and a total Change and Alteration of our Conſtitution. By Changes in a Government the other means, that by the Excellency of the Prince's Adminiſtration, and other concurrent Circumſtances, our Manners are reform'd, Piety is encourag'd and promoted, and Learning flouriſhes: ſo that theſe agree as ſoon as they underſtand one another.

But to proceed from theſe general, to ſome more particular Remedys againſt Logomachys; and ſince we are as liable to contend about Words as any other, let us, firſt of

Chap. 9. of all ſeek after Means for our own Cure, and then concern our ſelves for that of others.

1. The firſt Remedy to cure us of the Folly and Vanity of contending about Words, ſhall be much the ſame with that which *Deſcartes* preſcribes to cure us of our Prejudices: He perſuades us, *Once in our Lives to doubt of every thing, and not to admit one Propoſition to be true, before it has been carefully and thorowly examin'd, and found to be built upon a lid Foundation; its Truth being perceiv'd by us ſo clearly and diſtinctly, that it's impoſſible for us any longer to refuſe giving it our Aſſent. Let us thus uſe our ſelves in a particular manner to doubt of the Truth and Importance of all Controverſys which have been on the Stage in our time, or which are at preſent: Whether they be about Words or Things; or partly about one, and partly about the other.* And we ſhall never want Cauſe to doubt of the Truth of many things; whilſt Contentions about Words are ſo *common*; whilſt their Cauſes are ſo *natural* to us; when we conſider how uſually they deceive Perſons of great Learning, how many *kinds* there are of 'em, and how they have *ſpread* and *ſcatter'd* themſelves abroad throout all the Arts and Sciences.

The Time of our Lives in which we firſt engage our ſelves in Controverſys, is very remarkable. 'Tis in our youth, when all our Learning conſiſts in the remembrance of a Heap of Words at the beſt, very confuſedly and imperfectly underſtood. So that we are taught to diſlike Opinions, before we well know what they are: If our Tutors don't approve of 'em, we condemn 'em, right or wrong.

wrong. It's difficult, even in thoſe of *riper Years*, to interpret an Author fairly, for whom they have an Averſion or Contempt. And it's as difficult fairly to interpret a Book, which for Reaſons beſt known to our ſelves, we are reſolv'd to anſwer before we have read it. Chap. 9.

Theſe things well conſider'd, ſhou'd methinks convince us of the neceſſity of being cautious and wary, in the firſt place, in judging of the *Importance* of a Controverſy; and then, if it be really of weight, (for others ought to be ſlighted) in examining whether the Controverſy be indeed wholly about things themſelves, or whether they do not in ſome degree conſiſt of *Contentions about Words*; and in diſtinguiſhing one from t'other.

I wou'd not have any prejudic'd againſt this Rule by an imaginary fear of its leading them into Scepticiſm. For, let *Deſcartes*'s Precept of disbelieving, or doubting of the Truth of all Propoſitions before evident Proof, tend ever ſo much to *perplex* our Underſtandings, and by that means to *tempt* them to deſpair of knowing *any thing*, becauſe *ſome things* are not to be underſtood; and to demand *Certainty*, where only *Probability* is to be had: Notwithſtanding all this, I ſay, my Rule holds good, and has not one ill Conſequence attending it. For, be the Controverſy of ever ſo great Importance, what Harm is there in deferring to judg, whether it be concerning things really different, or only about Words *ill-expreſs'd*, and *miſunderſtood*, till I am more ſatisfactorily inform'd of the Matter; tho that ſhou'd not happen till Doomſ-

day.

Chap. 9. day? I can't think but I ſhou'd act very excuſably, yea juſtly and prudently in ſo doing. For I don't doubt of the truth of any momentous Propoſition, on the Knowledg of which my Salvation depends; but whether it be poſſible for a rational underſtanding Man to believe that certainly falſe, which I as firmly believe to be undoubtedly true: or, whether the difference between us be not more about Words than Things; ſo that by contending with one another, we ſhou'd only make our ſelves ridiculous, by fighting with our own Shadows, inſtead of Subſtance and Reality. To give an Inſtance: To doubt whether there be *one* God or *many*, and an Adherence to this Doubt, is (if in any Caſe not wicked, yet) certainly very dangerous, and apt to be attended with fatal Conſequences. But, if any doubt, whether the *Gentiles* did really hold a *Plurality* of Gods, and therein totally diſagree with us Chriſtians; his Doubt may perhaps be juſtly thought to proceed from want of Knowledg and Reading: But all this does not prove it *damnable*. So far from it, that it ſeems an almoſt infallible Sign, that the Man is ſo fully convinc'd in himſelf of the *Unity* of the Godhead, that he hardly thinks it poſſible for any to disbelieve it.

2. Frequent and ſerious Thoughts of a wiſe Obſervation of my Lord *Verulam*, may alſo, I think, be of uſe towards effecting the Cure of this great Evil of contending about Words: *It oftens happens*, ſays he, *that a learned, intelligent Perſon hears ignorant Men violently arguing a Point, and ſeeming to differ about it as widely, as the Eaſt does from the Weſt, who yet have the very ſame Sentiments, and do entirely*

entirely agree even in the Matter debated, tho they themſelves don't know it; but diſpute on, till they are weary, and juſt as wiſe as when they began. If now, one Man be capable of obſerving this in another, who yet can boaſt of no ſuch vaſt Superiority of Judgment above other Men; how credible, if not certain, is it, that the infinitely wiſe God, the only Searcher and Knower of Hearts, obſerves as much trifling Impertinency, and much more, in the Debates and Controverſys of the moſt learned, intelligent and accurate of frail Mortals in their preſent State? Chap. 9.

3. But the Prejudices we took up in our youth, againſt this Man and that Party, may in time, and by the uſe of proper Means, be worn out and forgot; were it not for thoſe deprav'd Paſſions and Affections which we ſuck'd in with our Mother's Milk. It's no ſuch mighty matter to doubt, whether we perfectly underſtand the Sentiments of our Adverſary; but it's very difficult, not to have an ill Opinion of him, whom we have been long us'd to cenſure and miſtake. 'Tis alſo a very eaſy matter to give others excellent Advice, and uſe many undeniable Arguments effectually to perſuade 'em not to give way to their Paſſions, in Diſputations and Debates; but to argue calmly, like Men and Philoſophers. Yet, alas! when all is ſaid, You, and I, and every one elſe, muſt needs own, that it's much eaſier to give good Advice, than to take it: And that of Scholars eſpecially, he wou'd be a great and happy Man indeed, if it were lawful to call him a Man, who cou'd live in a perfect Conformity with his own Precepts.

Chap. 9. As the Difficulty mention'd increaſes Controverſys amongſt ſome People; ſo it ought to render 'em ſuſpected by thoſe who ſtudy to *know themſelves*, as much as to find out the Diſpoſition and Sentiments of *others*. They ſhou'd not eaſily confide in their own Judgments, eſpecially when it inclines 'em to give the worſt Interpretation they can of their Adverſary; as knowing it generally proceeds from a vicious Cauſe. And here let us be perſuaded to take great care, that we don't wickedly charge the Ill-will, Hatred, and Malice we diſcover againſt the Erroneous, on our *Love of Truth*. Such People as are guilty in this reſpect, talk as if they did not know what Love and Hatred mean. Can I be reaſonably angry, and perſecute another with bitter Words and cruel Uſage, becauſe he does not poſſeſs ſome good thing which I do? If too great a Love of our ſelves and Opinions do ſometimes claſh with the Love we ought to have for thoſe who diſſent from us; wherever the Love of Truth is, that is not repugnant to a Love and Eſteem for thoſe who in our Judgments are erroneous. For, from a pure ſincere Love of Truth ſprings a loving Compaſſion for the Erroneous. And in this Compaſſion conſiſts that Zeal which ſo well becomes Chriſtians.

But, I am afraid leſt all, that has or can be ſaid, ſhou'd prove ineffectual for our Cure. Every one ought to take pains to inform and regulate his own Mind and Affections: This being the moſt difficult and laborious Undertaking in the World, we ſhou'd earneſtly beg Help of him, *who ſearches into all things, even the*

the deep and hidden Things of God; in whoſe Power and at whoſe Command are the Hearts of all Men, which he turns, guides and directs, as the Rivers of Water, whereſoever he pleaſes. Chap. 9.

For, if in any thing we want the Aſſiſtance of the Infinitely Wiſe and Almighty God; we have certainly a Neceſſity for it, to aid and direct us in our Endeavours after the true Knowledg, and right Government of our ſelves.

4. If our Adverſary, againſt whom we diſpute, aſſures us that we do him an Injury in aſcribing to him an Opinion which he deteſts and diſowns, and which is not the Conſequence of any of his Doctrines: We ought not to be backward in owning it probable, that we might miſunderſtand and miſrepreſent both him and his Opinions. "But, pray Sir, "ſays one, if I am oblig'd to confeſs my ſelf "in an Error, and that I was a mere Trifler "about Words; to make my Recantation of "one part of one Book, and another part "of another: what will my Friends, Fol-"lowers, and Admirers ſay of me? Don't "pretend to perſuade me to what is ſo con-"trary to my Honour. I'll ſooner hearken "to you in any thing than this." Now I'll appeal to my Reader, whether this be not ridiculous. For, others ſee what we won't own, but endeavour to hide and conceal. We are like Children, who wink hard, and then think no body elſe can ſee 'em. We may be well aſſur'd, that others don't only ſee we have err'd, but that, by reaſon of an unmanly, mean-ſpirited Shame, we perſevere in our Error. They ſee (and ſure-

Chap. 9. ly not without juſt Scorn and Contempt of us) that we ſtubbornly perſiſt in an Error, leſt we ſhou'd own our ſelves to have been in one; or, which is all one, leſt we ſhou'd be forc'd to acknowledg our ſelves *Men*. If we wou'd ingenuouſly confeſs, that we did not rightly and thorowly underſtand the Mind of the Author with whom we diſputed, no body wou'd have the leaſt reaſon to upbraid us. For, are not the Authors themſelves better Interpreters of their own Words than we can pretend to be? The wiſeſt Men are often (not to ſay daily) deceiv'd with Words miſunderſtood. And it's a true and certain Character, not only of an honeſt, but of a great and heroick Soul, and ſincere Lover of Truth, to be ſo much a Maſter of himſelf, as to dare own himſelf in an Error, in contempt and ſpite of all the ridiculous Mockery and Drolls of the Vulgar. Since all Men err, they who dare not own it, are either blind, or ſuch poor-ſpirited Wretches, whoſe great and only Concern is, *What will People ſay of us?* All their Hopes and Fears are terminated in the Smiles and Frowns of the Mob. To theſe they have given their Books as Pledges, that they will not, with St. *Auſtin*, make any Recantations: but, if encourag'd with their Favour, will defend their Errors to their Lives end.

But here a Queſtion may very properly be ask'd, *Whether we may never charge a Man with an Opinion which he diſowns?* I ſay, in anſwer to this, we may, *when the other's Proteſtation is manifeſtly contrary to Fact.* For, 'tis in vain for any to deny in Words what is plainly

plainly evident by their daily Practice. But, in all other Caſes, we ought to act with the greateſt Caution. If the Words of an Author, conſider'd with the utmoſt Care and Diligence, without any Paſſion or Prejudice, will fairly admit of no other Senſe than that in which we underſtand 'em: If, again, our Adverſary be a great Maſter of Propriety of Expreſſion, and ſpoke (not in the confus'd Hurry of a Diſputation, but) deliberately, adviſedly, upon Premeditation, when his Mind was calm and ſerene, and free from tumultuous, diſturbing Paſſions: If, in the laſt place, there be a manifeſtly apparent Cauſe, why he ſhou'd diſſemble or conceal his Opinion; as the Hopes of Preferment, or the Fear of loſing it; or any other like Conſideration: When theſe three Circumſtances concur, we may oftentimes, without breach of Charity, aſcribe an Opinion to a Man which he profeſſedly diſowns. But when theſe Circumſtances do not moſt evidently concur; it's the beſt way to let every one interpret his own Words, that we may attribute no Opinions to another, but what he acknowledges and profeſſes. Beſides, it becomes Men and Chriſtians to believe, rather that Mens Words are unapt, improper, or indeed abſurd; than that their Sentiments are irreligious and profane. It ſeems too a Confirmation of the Truth, that they who ſpeak differently about it, may yet on both ſides be very Orthodox, and their Sentiments carefully examin'd, may be found to be very agreeable and conſiſtent. Chap. 9.

Chap. 9. Another Queſtion is, *Whether we may not aſcribe to a Man an Opinion, which indeed he does not expreſly own or maintain; but which is a neceſſary Conſequence of the main Opinion he contends for.* We aſcribe to the moſt wiſe God, not only what is in ſo many words ſaid in the Text, but whatſoever is a certain Conſequence of it: For, he who ſees all Things, ſees that alſo. So in Men of Judgment and Accuracy, the moſt remote Conſequences of their Doctrine are reckon'd as much theirs, as their profeſs'd Opinions. For, theſe quickſighted Men diſcern things more connected and link'd together with their Doctrine, than they can who are more ſtupid, inſenſible and dull. But indeed the Subtilty of the moſt accurate is not to be boaſted of over-much; and beſides, their Minds are ſo entangled and perplex'd with Paſſions and Prejudices, that they can't uſe the Edg of their Underſtanding, which is naturally dull'd and blunted, to the beſt advantage. And then as for *Conſequences* which are real and neceſſary, ſome are very near, and therefore eaſy to be diſcern'd; others are more remote from their *firſt Antecedent*, to which we can't come but by other Conſequences, and ſometimes by a very long Train of 'em. Theſe things firſt conſider'd, we thus anſwer the Queſtion. No Propoſition ought to be aſcrib'd to a Man which he does not aſſert; no body aſſerts that which he does not *ſee to be* the Conſequence of his Words. Hence it follows, that none ought to be charg'd with Conſequences, however neceſſary, which he did not *perceive to be ſuch.*

A Man can't be ſaid to believe all things which may fairly be infer'd from his Doctrine, for he mayn't ſee nor know half of 'em. Chap. 9.

A Tenet, whoſe Deductions and Inferences are falſe, is it ſelf neceſſarily falſe. But, as he who ſpeaks a Truth, does not ſpeak all Truths conſequent to it; (for then all the Theorems, and Problems found out by our modern Mathematicians, muſt be aſcrib'd to thoſe who knew, or who invented the Axioms, Definitions, and *Poſtulata*) ſo he who ſays any thing that's falſe, is not guilty of ſaying or believing all the Falſhood which may neceſſarily be infer'd from his Doctrine.

If it be certain and evident, that a Man does not ſee ſome Conſequences deducible from what he has aſſerted; thoſe Conſequences can't juſtly be charg'd upon him. That he may not ſee 'em, is certain, both from ſome of his other Opinions, which are contradictory and repugnant to 'em, and from his own Practice which is not agreeable to the Tenor of 'em.

If it be certain, either from his Words or Practice, that he *does ſee* the Conſequence of his Opinions; the Conſequence is juſtly laid to his Charge. And it's probable, that ſome ſhou'd ſee the Conſequences of their Doctrines ſooner than others: as a ſharp acute Man, ſooner than a dull ſtupid Man; a Man who is free from Prejudices and Paſſions, than he who is quite blinded with 'em. And certainly it's more eaſy to diſcern a Conſequence that's near, and therefore eaſy, than another more remote and farther out of ſight. In judging of probable Conſequences we muſt be

Chap. 9. charitable, and ought to interpret every thing in the beſt Senſe we fairly can. In uncertain and doubtful Matters, it's beſt totally to ſuſpend our Judgment, eſpecially when we are in danger of wronging others, by aſcribing to 'em Opinions, which are none of theirs. What ought to make us cautious, is, that tho the abſurd Conſequences of our Adverſarys Opinions be juſtly and neceſſarily drawn from 'em; yet, that there's a great difference between them and us, and a great Allowance to be made in their favour. For, like fond Lovers, they can't ſpy the Faults of their Miſtreſs, their darling Opinions; but blind themſelves and others with ſome dark Diſtinction, which neither they nor any other Mortal underſtand. All we have to do, with relation to fallacious Conſequences, Conſequences not of an Opinion, but of (thoſe worſt of *Sophiſters*) our Hatred or Envy, is to take great care, that we nicely diſtinguiſh 'em from thoſe which, after a ſtrict and impartial Examination, we know to be *juſt*. But to return.

5. Another no ways contemptible Cure of contending about Words wou'd be, *carefully to examine all our Words, when we are out of the Heat of Diſputation:* Whether this or that Word be not a mere empty Sound, without Senſe or Signification, which we only think we underſtand; or, Whether the Idea ſignify'd by it be clear and diſtinct, or of a confus'd and general Signification: Whether ſuch a Word ſignify the Thing it ſelf or its Mode; a thing without us, or ſome Senſation or Perception within us. Let us endeavour

vour to give clear Definitions of Things, ſignify'd by the Words which we commonly uſe. This wou'd make a great alteration in our controverſial Writings, if it did not totally ſuppreſs 'em. Chap. 9.

Thus much may ſerve to direct us how to cure our ſelves of the great Evil of contending about Words. We ſhall now ſpeak of the Cure of it in others. And, our firſt Enquiry ſhall be, What's to be done, when Triflers about Words oppoſe us, or rather our bare Words, for no other reaſon than becauſe, as we imagine, they do not apprehend their meaning. Why, the firſt thing we have to do is to enquire, whether we be in fault for not explaining our ſelves clearly and intelligibly; or our Adverſary for not taking pains, or not being willing rightly to underſtand what we have ſo clearly propos'd, and preſented to their view: Whether we don't ſometimes uſe perplex'd, obſcure, and ambiguous Words. If we do, we wou'd do well in the firſt place, *To own and confeſs the Impropriety of our Expreſſions*; and then, *To promiſe, and to perform thoſe our Promiſes, of taking the utmoſt Care for the future to ſpeak ſo as to be underſtood.* But what, ſay you, muſt I begin again to learn to ſpeak? Yes, if you can't ſpeak intelligibly. But this moſt People diſdain, as diſhonourable to 'em. What miſtaken Mortals are we! We never are really and indeed more ſilly, than when we affect to appear moſt wiſe; and betray the greateſt Folly in being reſolv'd to confeſs our ſelves guilty of none, even the leaſt and moſt inconſiderable Error. If the two Rules mention'd

Chap. 9. tion'd be not ſo delightſom to the Practice; muſt nothing be done for the ſake of the Peace and Tranquillity of our ſelves and others?

Some call my Precepts hard; they're hard indeed:
But bitter Pills are us'd in time of need.

If our Words are not juſtly exceptionable, yet if we have others equally clear, let us for our Neighbour's ſake omit the former, and uſe the latter. The moſt apt Words are not of that Conſequence, as to be unneceſſarily retain'd to the loſs of Peace. The Deſign and Buſineſs of our Words is to convey our Thoughts to others. When they don't faithfully diſcharge their Duty, but are apt to miſrepreſent us to our Neighbours and Acquaintance; our beſt way is to diſmiſs 'em as (if not downright evil, yet) unprofitable Servants: we having others within call, who will better ſupply their places at preſent.

But, this can't be done always; we can't have an equal regard to every one, and ſpeak or write to every one's Capacity, and way of taking and apprehending Things. It's a hard matter to find out Words proper and ſutable to the Purpoſe; but much more difficult to ſpeak ſo clearly, as not to be miſinterpreted and miſunderſtood. But, we muſt do what is to be done; and if we have no other better Words to ſubſtitute in the room of thoſe which we have us'd, let's endeavour to interpret 'em ſo clearly, that the moſt ſtupid *may* underſtand 'em if they will,

and

and that the moſt ſpiteful and cenſorious be compel'd to it. Chap. 9.

But pray take care you don't mention a word of the Dullneſs or perverſe Underſtanding of him whom you have under Cure. Don't object to him, that *he diſputes about what he does not underſtand: That he does not diſpute fairly, but cavils, calumniates, and tells Storys that have not the leaſt Foundation of Truth.* Such Methods (be what you ſay ever ſo true) may ſerve to provoke 'em againſt the Truth, but will certainly never bring 'em to the Knowledg and Love of it. Let your Words be ſoft and obliging, when your Arguments are hard as Flints, and immovable as Rocks.

Wou'd you have your Adverſary acknowledg that he oppos'd what he did not underſtand? Transfer the Fault, as far as you can, upon your ſelf, or on the Language you write in; how barren it is of ſignificant and expreſſive Words: Deſire your Antagoniſt to ſupply your Defects, and give a candid Interpretation of your meaning. Rather ſay that you was not eloquent, or happy enough in expreſſing your ſelf, than that he wanted Accuracy to apprehend and underſtand you. By acting after this manner, it's ten to one but you bring him to a due, moderate, and calm Temper.

If you change a Word for your Adverſary's ſake, don't ſay, *I abſtain from this or that Word, becauſe it's diſpleaſing to you.* This wou'd make the Logomachy uncurable, for no body wou'd be thought to contend about Words. Rather own your ſelf to be *too little curious in the Choice of your Words*; but, that this

Chap. 9. this Fault ſhall be rectify'd for the future.

If there be any, as there are too many, who think you can't change your Words, without altering your Opinions; bear with their Error, they can't hurt nor diſgrace you.

Be neither obſtinate, nor too obſequious towards your Adverſarys; and let 'em clearly diſcern that you have not the leaſt deſign to trick or delude 'em: That you are a ſincere Lover of Peace and Truth, the Reputation and Advancement of which is the great Deſign and End of all your Writings.

But, what are we to do, when we ſee two Perſons eagerly contending, and earneſtly diſputing, who yet are really of the ſame Mind, and have the ſame Sentiments? I anſwer, that for the moſt part it's the ſafeſt way to let 'em alone; let 'em fight it out, leſt if you offer to part 'em, you get a broken Head for your pains, (this is no new, unheard of thing) and make 'em both your Enemys. The reaſon why learned Men are ſo quarrelſom, and angry at all Oppoſition to their Tenets, is this, they can't endure that any ſhou'd be accounted wiſer than themſelves. They therefore who endeavour to reconcile 'em, and to ſhew 'em the Agreement, Conſiſtency and Harmony of their Principles, ſeem to take too much upon 'em, and to reckon themſelves wiſer than the angry Diſputants. This is intolerable. They both, for the preſent, diſengage one another, and fall upon the poor Reconciler with their joint Forces, and all the Rage imaginable. And yet if we muſt direct a Stranger in his way; if a Bleſſing ſhall attend the Peace-makers, we muſt

muſt ſometimes venture on ſuch ungrateful Offices; but it ſhou'd be done with Prudence and Caution. We muſt carefully avoid giving the Diſputants any juſt reaſon to ſuſpect, that our Ambition is only to out-ſhine 'em, or that we affect a Magiſterial Authority over 'em, and wou'd have our Words paſs for Oracles. Let all our Words and Writings be truly modeſt, and be ſignaliz'd with indelible Marks of an ineſtimable Value for Peace and Concord. This can't be enough inculcated: for it's ſeldom, if ever, known that we do any remarkable Good, upon thoſe whom we take all the Methods we can to affront and provoke, or whom we ſlight and laugh to Scorn. Laughing at Logomachys may prevent 'em, but will never cure 'em.

If we be minded to reconcile two Diſputants, what Neceſſity is there of doing it profeſſedly? Perhaps, Reader, you may think me a Trifler; but I'll ſhew you the Method I ſhou'd follow. *Caius* and *Titius* diſpute, and diſagree not really and about Things themſelves, but moſtly about Words, and the different Ways they have to expreſs themſelves by. In the firſt place, go to *Caius* and require a true and full Account of his Opinion, as far as it diſagrees from that of *Titius*. Cauſe him to explain the Words and Expreſſions which occaſion the Controverſy, till he is clear from all Ambiguity. Then repeat and go over his Opinion in as plain Words as are to be had, and ask him, whether you rightly apprehend and repreſent it. If he ſays, *Yes*; write all down, and read what you

Chap. 9. you have written to him, if he approve it: give him Thanks for the pains he has taken in informing you; and go to *Titius*, and ſerve him in like manner. And when you have obtain'd both their Opinions clearly and particularly explain'd, ſhew 'em to the Diſputants, and 'tis much if you don't bring 'em nearer to a Reconciliation.

When you go about to reconcile two Diſputants, don't make a Bluſter and a Noiſe about it in the Title Page; but quietly mark and clearly explain the Points on which the Controverſy turns, and ſhew wherein they agree, and in what they really and truly differ. Produce the Words which contain the Points about which they differ: Conſider with care their Force and Significancy; take an accurate and careful View of all the Senſes in which they are commonly us'd, or which they will fairly admit of; eſpecially thoſe two in which the Diſputants uſe 'em. When you have found the Senſe of the Author, produce and deſcribe it in very plain eaſy Words. Demonſtrate it to be genuine by its Antecedents and Conſequences, the Scope, Deſign, and very Words of the Author; and bring your Proofs, that in theſe things they have the ſame Opinions, but in thoſe their Sentiments are really different.

If you ſee no difference between two Diſputants, don't preſently affirm that there's *none*. You can't ſee it: leave it then to the Examination of thoſe who are more acute, and in the mean time reſtrain your ſelf from judging one way or t'other.

Such

Such a Method I wou'd take with Conten- Chap. 9.
ders about Words, not perhaps that it is the beſt which can be pitch'd upon; but becauſe even this ſhews that Art, Dexterity, and good Management is requir'd in thoſe who wou'd cure Men of their Errors and Weakneſſes, inſtead of irritating and provoking 'em, and making 'em out of love with Truth. They who have found out a more effectual Method, are at liberty to make uſe of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Preſervatives againſt Contentions about Words.

WHAT Arms we ſhou'd uſe to guard againſt Logomachys, we clearly intimated when we treated of the Cauſes of Contentions about Words, eſpecially thoſe which are internal; for beware of the *Cauſe*, and 'tis odds on your ſide that you avoid the *Effect*. But becauſe this can't be too much inculcated, I ſhall yet more particularly conſider what we ought to obſerve in propoſing and explaining our own Opinions, and in examining thoſe of others. We teach by word of mouth, or by writing; let our great Concern be, not to teach Words, but Things. Let Tutors be careful that their Pupils take not up with Words, nor be contented with knowing the outſide of Things, but accuſtom themſelves to ſearch diligently after the Nature and Propertys of the Things themſelves: 'Tis not being able to repeat a parcel of Words readily and without heſitation, will change raw Boys into Learned Men; all the advantage they get by it, if any, is, that they pleaſe their *Pædagogues* by it. Oh, there's my brave Boy! in a little time you'll be fit for *Oxford*, Child; when all this while here is no Exerciſe of his Judgment and natural Reaſon;

Reaſon; there's little he can do, but what you may teach a Parrot to do. Chap. 10

Let every one think as he pleaſes: I confeſs I reckon him the better Scholar, who can make ſhift to give a tolerable account of one Thing which he does underſtand, than he who can very readily repeat ten which he does not. I vaſtly prefer Boys who can hardly find Words to expreſs their Thoughts by, before thoſe who have a Set of Words at their Fingers ends; but ask them the meaning of them, and truly they know very little, if any thing, of the matter. I wou'd for this reaſon have Children taught nothing above the reach of their Underſtanding; as many things in Grammar, Logick and Rhetorick are: Some eaſy things perhaps may be taught them in every of theſe Arts; but a whole Syſtem will never be underſtood by them, being more ſuted to the Underſtanding of thoſe of riper Years. *Logick* and *Rhetorick* are, ſays my Lord *Bacon*, Arts of Arts; one ſerves to inform and enlighten our Judgment, the other to beautify, brighten and adorn our Stile. Logick and Rhetorick repeated, and not underſtood, is like the *Echo*, it's nothing but mere Sound: Young Men thus taught are generally earneſt Contenders about Words and Terms of Art, vainly imagining that the very *Quinteſſence* of Knowledg is all contain'd in their inſignificant Words, for which they are as zealous, as for Liberty, Property, or Life it ſelf.

A good Method to preſerve our Youth from the love of contending about Words is, by all means to diſcourage in them the love

Chap. 10 of *contradicting* others on every occaſion. They who talk much are ſaid to be apt to lye; ſo they who contradict every one they are in company with, are apt to prate very fooliſhly, merely about Words, and they know not what. People bred in Schools and at Univerſitys are generally obſerv'd to be more guilty of this Folly, even in Civil Affairs and ordinary Converſation, than others; which renders them in Company very diſagreeable, troubleſome and ridiculous. I muſt needs own the Charge is too true of the greater part of Learned Men, eſpecially ſuch as have been bred in Cloyſters and Colleges. Tutors ſhou'd make it their great Care, that the Advantages we meet with in Schools and Colleges be ſo improv'd, as to outweigh the Inconveniences we are there expos'd and liable to: Let Young Men be inſtructed, not only to oppoſe or defend an Opinion; but to be impartial, patient, modeſt, attentive, and willing to be inform'd; to yield a ready Aſſent to the Truth, to compare their own Sentiments with thoſe of others, and chuſe that which they think more agreeable to the Truth. Let them be caution'd not to judg this Man in the right, becauſe he holds out longeſt, or has the laſt Word; as if they were like Men at Tennis, where he who ſtrikes the Ball laſt is reckon'd the beſt Gameſter. Other Exerciſes too might be found out for them beſides Diſputations: Let them be accuſtom'd to ſearch after deep and hidden Truths, to ſolve knotty Difficulties, to judg accurately, and to deſcribe clearly and elegantly every thing that's newly brought upon

on the Stage, and is really worth their Con- Chap. 10
ſideration: Let them be uſed to meditate, to be ſtudious and attentive; to proceed in a plain, natural Method, from Things known to Things unknown; and to deduce and infer what they learn from certain Principles: Teach them to diſtinguiſh Certainties from Uncertainties; what's evident and certain, from that which is only probable; and what is more probable, from that which is leſs: Often remember them to reflect on their Ignorance in this and t'other Point, that they may ſee Reaſon to diſtruſt and ſuſpend their Judgment in many Caſes, and not to be overforward in giving their Aſſent to an Opinion, and even to be more backward in condemning one: Let them be exercis'd in thoſe Sciences where there's no room for Diſputation, as in Arithmetical and Geometrical Demonſtrations, than which nothing is more likely to bring them off from the Conſideration and Admiration of Words to that of Things. Theſe Sciences alone are perfectly clear of all ſuch Words as ſignify nothing: Here we can't well miſtake Words for Things; we are not obliged to make theſe Sciences the main Study of our Lives; but certainly it's of great advantage to us, if it be not neceſſary, to have ſome acquaintance with them for the Service they do us, in ſhewing us what 'tis *to know*, and what 'tis *not to know*; when we are Maſters of Words only, and when we have a right underſtanding of the Things themſelves.

We come now to ſhew how Books are to be written, ſo as to give no occaſion of

Chap. 10 Contending about Words; and the firſt Direction is, *Be ſure that you your ſelf perfectly underſtand what you write.* Firſt conſider what your Sentiments are, what Judgment you have paſs'd concerning this or that Particular; and then whether it ſeem certain and undeniable, or only probable. Do you find your Aſſent to the Truth of this or that Propoſition extorted from you by its unqueſtionable Evidence, or do you find it in your power to ſuſpend your Aſſent? And in the laſt place you are to conſider why you think thus or otherwiſe, what Arguments you have for ſo doing; whether 'tis becauſe the Opinion pleaſes you, or that 'tis advantageous, pleaſant, or for your Reputation to believe it; whether 'tis becauſe it's a receiv'd, popular Opinion; or on the other hand, imagin'd to be above the apprehenſion of the Vulgar. If you have Arguments for your Opinion, you are to examine them, whether they conclude neceſſarily or contingently; whether they be more or leſs probable; and whether what you infer from them be unqueſtionably true, or you have only grounds barely to conjecture it to be ſo.

When you have well conſider'd all theſe matters, then commit your Opinion to writing, and labour to propoſe and explain it ſo clearly, that the attentive Reader may with the greateſt Eaſe underſtand, *what your Sentiments are; in what Senſe, under what Limitations, and with what Exceptions you acknowledg them yours, and the Reaſons why you think they are juſt and true.* Let there be undeniable Indications of Ingenuity and Candor in all

all your Writings, and always aim at Clear- Chap. 10
neſs in expreſſing your ſelf: Bring the Reader to an underſtanding of your Opinion by the ſame way, the ſame train of Arguments and Method of thinking, by which you was brought to the Belief of it your ſelf: Be inquiſitive after the moſt ſignificant Words, ſuch as will make the moſt laſting Impreſſion on the Minds of the Reader; and ſee that by no hard Words, nor confus'd Method, you perplex and tire him: Be perſuaded of this Truth, that People may talk too rhetorically, with too much ſubtilty, too ſublimely, too copiouſly, too briefly, too quaintly, but never too clearly: Look upon your ſelf as writing not only for the Learned and Ingenious, but for the Ignorant and Dull; for Readers who will not be attentive, who will read you with Prejudice; who, if they can't eſpy Faults in your Writings, will, with the help of a good Invention, make them, or at leaſt fancy and affirm them to be there; and who wou'd be better pleas'd to find one Error in your Writings than twenty Truths. If you advance any thing that's new, if you are not exceedingly modeſt, many of your Readers will reckon you inſult them; and if you are not plain and clear, they'll ſoon make you an Heretick or Blaſphemer. You muſt in this Caſe be more than ordinarily nice in explaining your Opinion, and conſidering your Words and Expreſſions, in order to prevent every the leaſt Ambiguity from hiding it ſelf under them. If Words in themſelves ambiguous muſt be us'd, fix their Signification by ſome *Nominal* Definition, and

Chap. 10 never (without neceſſity, which will ſometimes happen) uſe Words in another Senſe than they are us'd by the Vulgar; when you do, let us have notice of it, and tell us as plainly as you can, what Signification you put upon them.

If you are compel'd to uſe many doubtful ambiguous Words in a Book, or to uſe any in an unuſual Signification, put them all together in an Index, with accurate Definitions annex'd to them; and in the Book it ſelf, 'twou'd be an advantage to the Reader, to have them mark'd or printed in a different Character. The Lexicon we ſpoke of before wou'd be here alſo of great Uſe, if one cou'd be made wherein all Words us'd by the Learned ſhou'd have one particular, clear, proper Definition or Explication, in which they ſhou'd all be obliged to acquieſce. That this is a Work no ways impoſſible or impracticable, the Mathematicians have given us full Demonſtration: for what has been done may be done; and why what may be effected in one Science mayn't in another, I can by no means apprehend.

How Books may be ſo *written* as not to give the leaſt occaſion to Contending about Words, has been conſider'd; we come now to examine how they are to be *read* without danger, and there are two things which are requir'd of all Readers before they peruſe a Page: Theſe are, a Deſire, and an Ability or Capacity to underſtand the Author. By a Deſire of underſtanding him, I mean an impartial, juſt and conſtant Inclination to aſcribe to every man his own, avow'd, profeſs'd

Chap. 10

feſs'd Opinions, and none elſe. We ought to act by others as we wou'd deſire they ſhou'd act by us; and certainly there's no man living but thinks it an intolerable Injury, to be repreſented as holding abſurd or impious Opinions, when he really does not believe one Syllable of them. What an unmanly, pitiful, baſe Action wou'd the Defamer be guilty of! Wou'd it be any breach of Charity or good Manners, to poſt ſuch a man for a malicious, envious, perfidious Villain? But let us take care that by condemning others we don't condemn our ſelves alſo, or (like *Mænius* in the Satyr) forgive our ſelves thoſe things which we reckon unpardonable in others. And then in the next place, we ſhall be able to pick out the Senſe of an Author, when we read nothing but what's within the Compaſs of our Underſtanding; what's ſuted and agreeable to our Age, Genius, Learning, Education and Experience; and eſpecially when we bring along with us a Mind free from deprav'd Paſſions and Prejudices, and whoſe love for Truth prevails with it upon all occaſions, more than any other Conſideration in the world. I may have a very delicate reliſh of Wine which was never in my Cellar; and why mayn't I be alike affected with the Truth in what Book ſoever I find it, let it be antient or modern, or written by Friend or Foe?

Submit not your Reaſon to the Authority of other Men. If we believe with the Vulgar, we ſhall all believe alike: If we muſt

Chap. 10 believe as the wiſe and learned believe, let us firſt of all conſider, whether we have Skill enough to make a right judgment concerning other mens Wiſdom, or no: If we have, we don't do well to ſubmit blindly to their Determinations, ſince it's far eaſier to judg concerning the Truth of an Opinion, than of the Strength and Soundneſs of another man's Intellectuals. If we be not ſufficiently qualify'd to judg of other People's Profoundneſs, we are ſilly in giving up our Minds to the Conduct of thoſe, who, for any thing we know, may be as great Fools, and as often miſtaken as our ſelves.

In reading Books let our conſtant Practice be to embrace Truth wherever we find it; to reject nothing but what's apparently falſe, and to ſuſpend our Aſſent to things doubtful and uncertain.

Whilſt we are actually reading Books, two Things are requir'd of us, that we be *attentive* and *cautious*: Attentive, not to the Sound of the Words, but to their Senſe and the Scope of the Author; to the Significancy and Energy of the Words he uſes; to what goes before and what follows after, and to other Opinions of the ſame Author. Let him diſtinguiſh what's manifeſt from what's obſcure, in order to explain and interpret the latter by the former: His buſineſs is to conſider the Connexion between his Principles and Hypotheſes, the Strength of the Arguments and Reaſons he makes uſe of to ſupport his Opinions; and many other things, not eaſily enumerated, which reſtrain and limit Words of a more univerſal and general Signification:

Let

Let him conſult Divines, Lawyers and Logi- Chap. 10
cians, and obſerve the Rules they preſcribe for our right underſtanding and interpreting an Author.

But we muſt not only be attentive Readers, but, if we wou'd avoid Logomachys, be cautious and circumſpect: We have to do with Words which are very uncertain, and often deceive both Author and Reader; the *latter* very often, and eſpecially when he has a mind to fix an Abſurdity on the *former*. Self-love eaſily perſuades us to believe others in an Error; ſo that with many it's a very agreeable, as well as (in their Opinion) a reputable Employment, to ſhew themſelves capable of cenſuring and finding fault; when we ſhou'd rather imitate Strangers in foreign Countries, whoſe Wiſdom it is not to be over-credulous, eſpecially in matters which concern other People's Reputation. 'Tis a wiſe Caution of *Macchiavel, That when we ſee an Enemy acting ſeemingly contrary to the allow'd and eſtabliſh'd Rules of Policy, we ſhou'd ſuſpect, and immediately be upon our guard againſt Tricks and Stratagems.* And was it never known that an Author has render'd himſelf ridiculous, by endeavouring to expoſe his Adverſary as guilty of an Abſurdity which cou'd not juſtly be fixt upon him? Before we charge any with an Abſurdity, we ſhou'd firſt find out what 'twas that deceiv'd him; by what train of Thoughts or falſe Principles he was led into ſuch an aukward, nonſenſical Error; how far he went right on in his way, and what falſe appearances of Truth caus'd him to wander out of it.

Lib. 3. de Repub. c. 46.

Thus

Chap. 10 Thus much concerning Logomachys, or Contentions about Words. Men might eaſily cure themſelves of, and preſerve themſelves from ſo fatal and pernicious an Evil, if they were but willing: The Means and Method of their Cure I have as plainly as I can laid down before them, and have encourag'd them to the uſe of them. They who are not only unwilling to be recover'd to a good ſtate of mind themſelves, but do what they can to corrupt and infect others, are Gentlemen who are not to be prevail'd with by Perſons ſo obſcure and of ſo little Reputation, as thoſe of my Rank and Character. All that I ſhall ſay, either of them, or thoſe *Contentions about Words* of which they are ſo fond, is, That they are ſuch irreconcilable Enemies to Peace and Truth, that I can't, in my Opinion, conclude better than with my Advice and earneſt Requeſt to all who love and are ambitious to promote *theſe*, to keep at as great a diſtance from the *other*, as human frailty will allow.

A DISCOURSE OF THE Meteors of Stile.

NOT to deceive the Reader with a doubtful Expreſſion, by the *Meteors of Stile* is meant *Phraſes, which ſeem to be ſublime, but are indeed trifling and vicious.* The Term is borrow'd from *Longinus* the Rhetorician, who by ὕψηλα *Orationis*, underſtands a Diction truly ſublime, and by μετέωρα, one which has only a vain appearance of Elevation. At firſt it ſignify'd the ſame as ὕψηλον, but it has had the like misfortune as ſome other words, the abuſe of it has diverted it into a bad Senſe: for Pedants, who were oſtentatious of their Philoſophy and Eloquence, were, on every occaſion, talking of the Meteors of the Sky, and garniſhing their Harangues with that Figure; and therefore at length they had a Name impos'd on them from it, and were call'd * μετεωρολεσχαὶ, which, if we be-

* Heſych. lieve in Voce.

lieve *Heſychius*, denotes *thoſe who are ever talking of the Meteors of the Sky.* And hence the word has always imply'd ſomething of Reproach; and not only the Pretending and Vain-glorious were ſignify'd by μετεωρολογοι, but all vicious Sublimity in Stile was alſo call'd μετεωρα: as from the Abuſe of the word *Phœbus*, a Man who makes extravagant Flights in a Diſcourſe, is ſaid in *French*, *parler Phœbus.*

To underſtand what is a *Meteor* in Stile, 'tis neceſſary that we underſtand what is true Sublimity, which is therefore firſt to be explain'd. I will not determine whether the ὑψος of *Longinus*, and the μεγεθος of *Hermogenes*, are the ſame, as many have thought; or whether there is a Difference between them, as *Tanaquil Faber* was of Opinion, and the ingenious Tranſlator of *Longinus* in *French*, Monſieur *Boileau*. 'Tis at every man's Pleaſure to judg, as he ſees fit: for I am not going to conſtrue Rhetoricians Terms, but to give Precepts of Stile.

To a Great and a Sublime Stile, by which I mean the ſame thing, 'tis requir'd, Firſt, that the Subject it ſelf be *great* and *ſublime*. Some things are more valu'd among Men, and others leſs: the former, being more eſteem'd, are call'd the Greater; and thoſe, which are regarded in an inferior degree, the Leſs: and ſuch as excel among the firſt are term'd, in an eminent manner, *ſublime*, and produce Admiration in us; as thoſe which are little, move our Contempt.

All thoſe things therefore are great and ſublime, which we admire for excelling among them, to which Mankind give the Preference:

ference: Thus Kings are great, becauſe they are of a diſtinguiſh'd Rank among Men of Dignity and Figure, and they are ſtill greater who excel among Kings; and he is greateſt who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords: and upon the ſame account *Actions* and *Things* are alſo call'd Great.

Nor are only thoſe things great which are good, but alſo the bad, becauſe they beget Admiration by excelling in their Kind: Thus we ſay, great Cruelty, great Villany, great Miſery, and the like. And theſe things generally impreſs us more ſtrongly, and appear greater to us than thoſe which excel in Goodneſs; for they raiſe the Paſſions of Anger, Indignation, Fear, Sorrow, Terror and Deſpair, which are apt to magnify an Object, becauſe theſe Affections are as much more violent in Men, than thoſe which relate to Good; as ſhunning of Evil is a more vehement Principle than the Purſuit of Good. Hence it is, that proud arbitrary Princes chuſe rather to be fear'd than lov'd; becauſe Men ſometimes love things, tho they are ſmall and inconſiderable, but they ſeldom fear any thing but what is great: and Love is frequently not far remov'd from Contempt, whereas we deſpiſe nothing leſs than what we are much afraid of. And ſo Perſons of this Taſte had rather ſeem Great than Good; for the Appellation of Good is to many prepoſterouſly accompany'd with a certain notion of Meanneſs and Diminution.

Now it is not always neceſſary that an Orator's Subject ſhou'd be great in the Judgment of Philoſophers, or wiſe Men, who eſtimate

timate not the Value of Things by the vulgar Standard: 'Tis ſufficient if it is *great in the common Opinion of Mankind, or of thoſe to whom we addreſs our ſelves.* Thus a General, tho above ſo baſe a Regard himſelf, may yet make a noble Speech to the Soldiers about Plunder, in order to animate them to Battle, by the Hope of Booty; and an Orator may declaim warmly on an Injury or Affront, as an important Matter, tho *Socrates* or *Diogenes* wou'd have thought it a Trifle. But if a Thing, which is great in it ſelf, ſhou'd not appear ſo to an Audience, we muſt firſt prove it ſuch in a ſimpler Stile, and by force of Reaſon, rather than Magnificence of Words: And when by clear Tokens we perceive we have ſucceeded in this Point, then, and not before, we may raiſe our Stile into the Sublime, and give it a Majeſty. For this reaſon, the Beginning of a Diſcourſe ought to be plain and natural; becauſe 'tis improper to ſpeak pompouſly on a Subject, before we have made its Dignity to be underſtood, ſince a Hearer may have far meaner Thoughts of it than we.

But to ſelect a lofty Subject, is not alone ſufficient to render a Diction ſublime; we muſt alſo have a Genius equal to the Argument, and be able to diſcern its ſeveral Beautys, and form an Idea of it, which ſhall comprehend all its Excellence.

This we may call a Capacity and Vigour of Imagination: That is a capacious Imagination, which can at once, or in a very ſhort time, preſent to it ſelf a Multitude of Things without Confuſion, which ſurveys an illuſtrious

trious Subject on every ſide with wonderful Celerity, and examines it, and diſtinguiſhes what are the bright Parts of it, and to what it may properly be compar'd, or oppos'd.

The Force of Fancy conſiſts, in giving ſuch a lively Repreſentation of all the Particulars to the Mind, as ſhall almoſt amount to Senſe, and not raiſe a faint and diſtant Idea of the Thing, but make it ſeem, as it were, preſent to View. So that the bare Imagination ſhall produce the ſame Affections in us, as the actual Sight of it wou'd create.

This Force and Capacity of Fancy are particularly conſpicuous in the Poets: the latter is ſeen in their forming their Images of ſo many Parts, and expreſſing ſo many Circumſtances in them, that it is impoſſible to conceive how they cou'd all come into their Minds; and the former appears, when in reading their Writings, we don't ſo much ſeem to read, as to have the Things before our Eyes, and experience the ſame Tranſports as their Preſence is wont to provoke. Both the Capacity and Vigour of Imagination muſt meet together, to make a great Idea of a Thing in the Mind: for if the firſt is wanting, the Stile will be dry and barren; and if the laſt, it will be languid and heavy. *Ovid* never wanted a capacious Imagination, he abounded in this; but a Force or Strength of Fancy is ſometimes requir'd in him. Compare his *Dido*, and the *Dido* of *Virgil*; and in the one, you'l ſay, the Poet ſpeaks, tho with a world of Elegance; but in the other you ſee *Dido* herſelf in all her Fury and Deſpair.

But

But Imagination is not the ſole, nor the chief thing in a Stile; the Judgment muſt preſide over the whole, for * good Senſe and Underſtanding is the Foundation of writing well. If all that a haſty and luxuriant Fancy ſuggeſts, is not fit to paſs in a Poem, how much greater Caution muſt be had in Proſe, the Gravity of which allows far leſs Liberty to the Fancy?

Let the Judgment therefore govern the Imagination, and ſometimes remit, and ſometimes contract the Reins. To this end it muſt be clear and piercing thro every Part; it muſt be uncorrupt, not biaſs'd by a Fondneſs to its own Conceptions; and it muſt be ſevere and inexorable, not ſparing any Impropriety of the Fancy. Then it muſt diſtinguiſh what is principally to be admir'd in an Idea, and what will impreſs moſt at ſuch a Time and Place; whether it will be ſufficient to propoſe thoſe Parts which relate to the Grandeur of the Subject in general, or whether 'tis better to go over each of them ſeparately; whether only the chief are to be ſingled out, or one alone, which is moſt eminent to be inſiſted on, and touch'd up with the brighteſt Colours: And whether that, on which we wou'd draw moſt Admiration, ſhou'd be conceal'd, but conceal'd in ſuch a Manner as to make it look like ſomething very important. Let the Imagination view and review its Idea on every ſide, till it pleaſes the Judgment, and a true Critick pronounces; *This*

* Scribendi recte ſapere eſt & Principium & Fons.
Hor. Arte Poet.

Part

Part of it is admirable, this is to be diſplay'd to the Audience.

After the Image of a noble Subject is finiſh'd in the Mind, and approv'd by the Judgment, the next care is concerning the Words, which are as it were the Colouring, that we paint it out to others; ſo that it may ſeem as lofty to them, as it does to us. *Words, therefore, ſhou'd be equal to the Image, and the Image to the Thing*; and conſequently in a ſublime Stile, they ſhou'd alſo be ſublime, which they are three ways; *By the Authority of the Perſons who uſe them, by their Sound, and by their Signification.*

Words are ſublime by the Authority of ſuch as uſe them, which are not taken from Places where the Rabble and baſer People reſort, but from the Converſation of Perſons of good Breeding, and honourable Birth and Employment. A polite Taſte will eaſily diſtinguiſh theſe in any Language, from thoſe which are render'd coarſe and ſordid, by being in the Mouths of the Vulgar. When I ſpeak of Words, I underſtand alſo the Phraſes, call'd Proverbs, and the like.

Words are great in *Sound*, and Periods and Sentences (which have alſo a relation to the Sound of Words) if they fill the Ear, and are but juſt remov'd from oppreſſing it; like theſe in *Virgil*, *Venti ex Cavernis erumpunt*; *The Winds burſt out of their Caverns*: And Æneid. 1. theſe,

——*Crines effuſa Sacerdos* Æneid. 4.
Tercentum tonat ore Deos, Erebumq; Chaoſq;
Tergeminamque Hecatem.

De Rapt. Proſerp. And thoſe of *Claudian*, when he ſays, *Ceres*, upon the loſs of her Daughter, *Toto bacchatur Olympo.* But of this the Ear muſt judg, which is more elegant in ſome than in others.

But the greateſt Sublimity of Words conſiſts in the *Signification*; for every man knows ſome are more ſignificant than others, as in Latin, *amare* ſignifies more than *diligere*, *flagitare* than *petere*, *erumpere* than *evadere* (and in Engliſh to *loath* than to *diſlike*, and to *ſhock* than to *move*, &c.) It conduces therefore to the Elevation of Stile, not only to uſe Words which ſignify great Things, but alſo to ſelect thoſe which carry the fulleſt Senſe. Thus, *Fury furniſhes Arms*, is loftier than if the Poet had ſaid *Anger* inſtead of *Fury*.

Beſides the more known and the principal ſignifications of any Word, there are innumerable others affix'd by common Uſe, which ſome call a *ſecondary Senſe*. Thus if you cry out Thief upon a Man, you don't only ſay he has taken ſomething from the Owner without his Conſent, which is the principal meaning of the Word; but intimate a great deal more, as that you are angry at him, that you ſeek Vengeance on him, that you wou'd ſeize him, and that you deſpiſe him ſo much as not to fear his Reſentments: and ſometimes the Word is us'd in Merriment, and does not imply a Crime.

There are few Words which have not a Variety of theſe Significations, which are to be obſerv'd in every ſort of Stile, and eſpecially in the Sublime; not only that nothing may be ſignify'd by a Word contrary to what we deſign, but alſo that theſe Significations

may

may ſerve to increaſe the Sublimity of the Diſcourſe. How much did *Ceſar* expreſs in a ſingle Word, when he appeas'd the mutinous Troops, by ſtiling them *Quirites?* 'Tis in vain to ſearch a Dictionary for all the meanings of this Word, which the pronouncing of it convey'd to the ſeditious Soldiers. Nay, I may affirm, that nothing imparts greater Majeſty to a Diſcourſe, than Words which have many Significations of this kind: For here a noble Senſe lies conceal'd in few Words, and thoſe the moſt ſimple, than which there cannot be any thing more ſublime. Sueton. in J. Cæſare, §. 70.

So *Valerius Poplicola*, the Aſſertor of the *Roman* Liberty, told the People, who were jealous of his affecting the Kingdom, becauſe of the Houſe he had built on Mount *Velia*; "* No, Fellow-Citizens, *Publius Valerius*'s "Houſe ſhall not obſtruct your Liberty; "*Velia* ſhall not become dangerous to you. "I will not only level my Houſe to the "Ground, but even place it beneath the "Hill, that you may dwell above your ſuſ-"pected Countryman. Let them build up-"on *Velia*, with whom you can better truſt "your Liberty, than with *P. Valerius*."

Here you may ſee what ſignificancy a few Words may have; for ſtrike out the Repetition of *P. Valerius*'s Name, and thoſe words,

* Non obſtabunt Publii Valerii Ædes Libertati veſtræ, Quirites; tuta vobis erit Velia. Deferam non in planum modo Ædes, ſed Colli etiam ſubjiciam, ut vos ſupra ſuſpectum me Civem habitetis. In Velia ædificent, quibus melius quam P. Valerio creditur Libertas. *Livy, Decad.* 1. *lib.* 2. *c.* 8.

Your ſuſpected Countryman, and you will ſee how much of the Dignity of the Sentence is loſt.

And what can be ſublimer than that of *Cicero*; * "The Senate knows this, the Con-"ſul ſees it, and yet the Villain lives?" What an Energy is there in theſe words, *the Senate*, *the Conſul*, pronounc'd in the Senate by *Cicero*, who was himſelf the Conſul? And how much leſs had he expreſs'd, if he had ſaid, *You* know this, and *I* ſee it? And to this end were *Figures* invented, that at the ſame time as we declare a thing, we may alſo declare our Affections. Thus in the ſame Oration, when *Cicero* exclaims, *O Tempora! O Mores! Oh the Times and Manners!* he not only ſhews the Perverſeneſs of the Age and Manners, but manifeſts alſo his wonderful Concern at the Depravity of both: and ſo other Figures expreſs other Paſſions.

Tropes alſo, and eſpecially *Metaphors*, heighten a Stile, when juſtly imploy'd; but they cannot find place in a ſublime one, unleſs they are render'd *neceſſary*, either by the variety of the Diſcourſe, or becauſe the proper Words ſeem not fully to anſwer the Greatneſs of the Subject: 'tis then we are to borrow others, which are of a more lofty Senſe. But in the Doctrine of the Tropes, too many convince the World they can play the Rhetorician.

Moſt Readers will think what has been already laid down, ſufficient to Sublimity of Stile; but one thing, in my Opinion, is ſtill

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* Senatus hoc intelligit, Conſul vidit, hic tamen vivit. *Cicer. Orat. in Catilin.*

behind,

behind, and which, for ought I know, may be the chief. An Orator not only paints out his Subject in his Oration, but alſo himſelf; for, as *Demetrius* truly ſays, *The Writer's Image is to be ſeen in every Word he uſes.* In the ſublime Stile, therefore, we ſhou'd not only make the Subject, but even our Mind appear ſublime; I ſay the Mind, not the Wit, which may ſometimes be ſpritely and great, where the Mind is baſe and little. Lib. περὶ ἑρμηνείας.

He has a great and noble Mind, who is ſo wholly mov'd by Things which are important and great, as to be delighted only with them, and to regard them ſo entirely, as to deſpiſe thoſe which meaner Minds eſteem, as of no Conſequence to him; who is of one Tenor in every Condition of Life, always Maſter of himſelf, true, ſincere, open-hearted, and tenacious of the Right; and who ſo preſerves his Dignity, as not to be overborn by Fear or Hope, or any other Perturbation, to commit an unworthy Action. Let an Orator paint himſelf thus, if he wou'd obtain a Majeſty to his Speech.

And thus he will always draw himſelf thro the whole Diſcourſe, who does not labour it with a ſervile Diligence and Care, nor follow the trifling Rules of Rhetoricians, which is the Mark of a narrow Mind; but whoſe Eloquence ſhines with a maſculine Vigour, and is ſimple and correct. This is to be found in him who ſpeaks as he thinks, and who is more careful what he ſays, than how he ſays it; and who, in ſhort, ſpeaks well, not becauſe he endeavours to do ſo, but becauſe he cannot ſpeak otherwiſe: Such a

Man delivers himſelf with a certain noble Boldneſs and Liberty of Speech; and as he has nothing unmanner'd and rude, ſo he is far from a childiſh Baſhfulneſs and Awe, and a fulſom and proſtituted Flattery.

The Paſſions themſelves, which in moſt Men are Signs of a weak and impotent Mind, will in ſuch an one appear generous and brave; ſuch is the Anger of *Neptune* in the firſt Æneid of *Virgil*, and the Tears of *Cicero* in his Oration for *Milo*.

Sentences diſpers'd thro an Oration, alſo ſhew the Greatneſs of the Orator's Mind; but then they muſt ſeem to ariſe of themſelves, while he is imploy'd in proſecuting his Subject, and not to be ſtuck into it on purpoſe. 'Tis almoſt impoſſible for any Man to ſhew this Greatneſs of Mind, who is not really poſſeſs'd of it; if you ſtrive to diſſemble it, the Affectation it ſelf, or ſome Metaphor taken from a mean and ordinary thing, or a pompous Figure imploy'd on a plain and humble Argument, will diſcover that it is not in you. 'Tis in this *Livy* excels thro his whole Hiſtory, and eſpecially in the Speeches: for when you read them, you don't ſeem to read *Livy*, but to hear the Heroes and Conquerors themſelves.

And hither are ſome Sayings of the Antients to be refer'd; *I ſcorn to ſteal a Victory*, ſaid *Alexander*. If a Man were put to gueſs whoſe Saying this was, and were well acquainted with *Alexander*'s Character, he wou'd name him for the Author. And who but *Alexander*, when *Parmenio* ſaid, *I wou'd do this if I were* Alexander, wou'd have anſwer'd,

And

And I, if I were Parmenio : *Thou carrieſt* Ceſar? How great a Thing does that ſignify, and alſo how great a Mind?

We have a Saying reported of a Duke of *Genoa*, who was forc'd to go into *France*, to ſubmit himſelf, in the name of the Republick, to the *French* King. After they had ſhewn him all the Raritys and Splendor of *Paris*, they ask'd him, *What was the greateſt Wonder he had ſeen in the moſt celebrated City and Court of the whole World?* He immediately reply'd, *My Self.* Nothing is wanting to the Sublimity of this Anſwer. Here is a perfect Image of an exalted Mind, and the nobleſt Thought expreſs'd, by one plain, but moſt ſignificant Word; there is an incredible Force in this Sublimity, and they who read, or hear ſuch Sayings, perceive their Souls to grow elated at them, and generous Paſſions to beat within their Breaſts.

By this Sublimity, that which otherwiſe wou'd provoke and enrage, ſerves only to beget Admiration, and Men are pleas'd even with an unfriendly and bitter Truth. *Alexander* is ſaid to have given a Pirate his Life, for making this Return: *I am call'd a Pirate, becauſe I infeſt the Seas with one poor Skiff; but you, who do the ſame thing with a numerous Fleet, are ſtil'd a King.* The Monarch was unwilling the Pirate ſhou'd exceed him in the Grandeur of Mind, which this Saying declar'd.

From what has been ſaid, it appears how extraordinary a thing it is, not to ſtrike out one ſublime Saying or two, but to make a whole Diſcourſe ſo. Briefly to compriſe what

I have ſaid; he who wou'd perform this, *muſt form a great Idea from a noble Subject, and expreſs alſo a Sublimity of Mind in Words ſo ſignificant, as to tranſport a Man into an admiration both of that and his Subject.* If the Difficulty of this ſhall deter any from attempting this ſort of Stile, it will be a prudent part in them to forbear; ſince they may ſucceed happily in another. But in the Sublime very few write tolerably; here and there one and another excels, but all the reſt, by endeavouring at it, only betray their Want of Judgment, or the Poverty of their Senſe; and, as *Horace* ſays, *Dum Humum vitant, Nubes & Inania captant*; while they purſue Sublimity, they only write Fuſtian, and by ſoaring, catch nothing but an empty Cloud, a *Meteor* of Stile; which is the inſeparable Conſequence of injudiciouſly affecting to be ſublime. But to proceed.

The *Meteors* of Stile may all be reduc'd under theſe three Heads: 1. When a Diction truly ſublime is imploy'd on a trivial Subject. 2. When the Subject is great, but the Stile is not truly ſo. 3. When neither the Subject, nor the Stile is truly ſublime. The Cauſe of the firſt is, that either we eſtimate indifferent Things above their real Value, or elſe imagine we can't handle a Subject elegantly, unleſs we treat it magnificently: the former argues a little Mind, and both of them a Weakneſs of Judgment.

Examples of this Fault are innumerable. The *Literati*, when they ſpeak of their own Works, generally aſſume too high a Tone, perhaps becauſe they think too well of their own Per-

Performances. They beſtow all the Figures of Stile, proper to expreſs the moſt vehement Paſſions, *to ſhew how ſuch a Paſſage is to be read, what this or that Word ſignifies, or in what Method any Art is to be taught*, &c. *Julius Ceſar Scaliger*, a great Name in the learned World, having taught his Son *Sylvius* the Rudiments of the Latin Tongue, and going to inſtruct him more perfectly in the Language, ſpeaks to him thus: *Now you have paſs'd thro the more Juvenile Part of Literature, it will not be proper for you to enter upon the graver Studys, till you know the Cauſes of thoſe Precepts by which the Courſe of every excellent Science will be unfolded to you: For tho you have imbib'd theſe things, which are the Effect of exact Obſervations, yet becauſe you may be often forc'd to doubt whether, and always why it is ſo, I cannot enjoy my ſelf, unleſs I ſee you ſafely deliver'd from all theſe Difficulties.* And a little after: *Tho theſe things, my Son, may at firſt ſeem, to your Age, unpalatable and hard; yet I wou'd have you conclude with your ſelf, that what is eaſy and vulgar, is not worth your Care. And how noble will it be for you to have been accuſtom'd to all the moſt excellent Things from your tendereſt Years? Therefore theſe Hardſhips ſtrike Terror and Deſpair only into barbarous and uncultivated Minds; but for us, who are Lovers of Truth, you muſt believe there are, as it were, arm'd Legions ready to aſſiſt us.*

A Man wou'd ſwear *Hamilcar* were firing his Son *Hannibal* with an implacable Hatred to the *Romans*, or at leaſt that our *Julius Ceſar* were teaching his *Sylvius*, by what Valour and Conduct he ſhou'd recover the Principality

of

of *Verona*, which he had loſt; and not that a Father was giving his Son the Rules of Grammar.

To this we may pertinently add *Ludovicus Vives*'s * Judgment concerning *C. Longolius*: *He uſes high-ſounding and* Ciceronian *Words*, ſays *Vives*, *but this makes him appear the more ſolemn Trifler, becauſe he adapts them to inconſiderable things; for he was not content laboriouſly to imitate the Words and Phraſes of* Cicero, *but he muſt needs copy him in every thing; and the honeſt Gentleman, while he lay ſnug in a Corner of his Study, auguſtly aſſumes the Care of the chief Empire of the World, which was as ridiculous in him, as if he had put on a Giant's Clothes, and mimick'd his Port and Voice.* This prepoſterous Sublimity never ſhew'd it ſelf more, than in the Apology of this *Longolius*; where he defends himſelf againſt the frivolous Cavils of his Adverſarys ſo illuſtriouſly, that *Charles* the Firſt of *England* cou'd not have imploy'd a greater Magnificence of Words when he was try'd for his Life. *Eraſmus* has laſh'd ſuch Abſurditys with his wonted Facetiouſneſs.

In Ciceroniano.

And not only the Imitators of *Cicero*, but the whole Claſs of Copiers almoſt are guilty of the ſame Fault. You ſhall have the Stile of the greateſt Men imitated; by whom? By obſcure Fellows, lock'd up in a Chamber, and unknown to any but to Boys, or ſome of their own Degree. And ſo ſome harmleſs Creatures, who have only a little Common-Place Learning, ſhall imitate Debates of the deepeſt

* L. Vives de conſcribendis Epiſtolis.

Stateſmen,

Stateſmen, on Matters of the laſt Conſequence. An Imitator of *Livy*, whenever he is at a loſs in the reading of a Sentence, ſhall ſpeak juſt as if the *Roman* Army were embarraſs'd at the *Furcæ Caudinæ*. If any one happens to innovate in the Method of teaching a Science, an Admirer of *Saluſt* ſhall borrow all the Colours, in which he has painted *Catiline*, to paint out the Inſolence of ſuch a Deed. He with whom *Tacitus* is a darling Author, in treating a Queſtion or Topick of the Schools, ſhall ſpeak ſententiouſly, and utter himſelf with the Obſcurity of an Oracle, that one wou'd think he was delivering the Arts of Government, and Secrets of State. A conſtant Reader of *Quintus Curtius* ſhall ſpeak of the *Lucubrations* of the Learned, juſt as *Alexander* has of the Conqueſt of *Aſia*. One ſhall apply all the Images, by which *Velleius Paterculus* has deſcrib'd his Heroes, to any of his Acquaintance whom he has a mind to commend; and another ſhall relate the Squabbles of Grammarians, as pompouſly as *Florus* does the Wars of the *Romans*.

What, in the name of Wonder, can you deſire? There is not a Village or Hamlet in any Quarter of the World, but theſe Imitators ſhall adorn it with all the Enſigns of Majeſty that were in antient *Rome*; the *Forum*, the *Comitium*, *Roſtra*, *Capitol*, *Sella Curules*, the *Faſces*, *Axes*, *Trabea*, *Ovations*, and *Triumphs*. They may ſay perhaps with *Tityrus* in *Virgil*,

Urbem,

Urbem, quam dicunt Romam, Melibœe putavi,
Stultus ego, huic noſtræ ſimilem.

They are more ridiculous than the Fellow, who thus deſcribes a paltry Rivulet: *It pours out with great Rapidity from the* Taurick *Mountains, and at length diſembogues it ſelf into the Sea*; juſt as if he were ſpeaking of the Torrent of *Nilus* or *Euphrates*.

Demetrius, περὶ ἑρμηνείας.

Nay, which is enough to ſurprize any Man, our Romanizing Authors ſhall diſcover all the *Roman* Magiſtrates in their Formalitys and Robes, not only in any Civil State, but even in any Republick, as they call it, of Letters. To this honour'd Society *Michael Fern* thus dedicates *Campanus*'s Poems: *To the* * *perpetual Dictator, our Great Emperor,* Pomponius Lætus, *and to the Maſter of the Horſe, and all the Republick of Letters,* Michael Fern *of* Milan, *one of the meaneſt Foragers, wiſhes a warm Fight, and a glorious Victory.* Of the ſame Tribe are they alſo who perpetually ſet out in an Oration with ſome celebrated Names of Antiquity, thus; *Alexander the Great, Pyrrhus* King of *Epirus, Hannibal* that Terror of *Rome, Quintus Fabius, M. Marcellus, one the Shield, and the other the Sword of the* Roman *People*, &c. If a Perſon unread in Hiſtory were to hear theſe Names ſo often

* Dictatori perpetuo, Imperatori noſtro maximo, Pomponio Læto, Magiſtro Equitum, cunctæque Reipublicæ Literariæ, Michael Fernus Mediolanenſis, vilis Pabulator, ſtrenuam Pugnam, pulchram Victoriam.

repeated

repeated in the Academical Exerciſes, he might juſtly ask if they were all Doctors or Maſters of Arts. This Abuſe has render'd ſome of them ſo nauſeous in * *France*, that unleſs a Man has a mind to expoſe himſelf, he muſt not venture to mention *Cambyſes* or *Epaminondas* in an Oration; and if at any time 'tis neceſſary to ſpeak of them, he muſt do it indirectly by a Circumlocution. *Martial* has ingeniouſly rally'd this Boyiſh Folly, in his Epigram on *Poſthumus* a *Roman* Pleader.

Non de Vi, neq; Cæde, nec Veneno, &c.
Lib. 6. E. 19.

My Lord, th' Indictment does not run
On Houſes fir'd, or Murders done;
Three Goats are miſſing, ſays my Brief,
And we tax Mæris *for the Thief.*
Thus, read profoundly in the Laws,
Our Poſthumus *unfolds his Cauſe.*
Well, to your Evidence proceed,
Replies the Judg, and prove the Deed:
The Serjeant kindles on his Stand,
Prepares his Lungs, and waves his Hand;
Then Cannæ, Mithridates *War,*
The Punick *Perjury and Fear;*
With Scylla, Marius, Mutius, *all,*
He mouths, and thunders thro the Hall.
Dear Poſthumus, *enough of theſe,*
And now, for Heaven's ſake, if you pleaſe,
Come to the Text, and mind your Notes
At length, and let us have the Goats.

* Bohours, Remarques ſur le Langue Francoiſe.

A like Fault is that of others, who, to embelliſh their Stile, will prove the mereſt Trifle, which no body can be ignorant of, by the Authority of ſome illuſtrious Antient: as if a Man might not ſay the Sun ſhines, unleſs *Alphonſus* King of *Arragon*, or *Ageſilaus* had ſaid it before him. Theſe Coxcombs are as ridiculous as he wou'd be, who at an Entertainment, in order to perſuade the Company to be merry, ſhou'd gravely addreſs them: *The* Venuſinian *Swan ſays no leſs truly than elegantly*; Nunc eſt bibendum, *Now let us ply the Glaſs.*

This Generation of Writers give a lofty Stile alſo to inconſiderable Subjects, and make *Tityrus* talk in a Paſtoral, like *Æneas* in the Epopee; and the old waiting Gentlewoman in their Plays, ſhall contend with the Princeſs her ſelf in Sublimity and Magnificence of Sentences, and a Footman ſpeak like an Emperor: They lament in an Elegy, like *Hercules* in his raving Fits; and their *Familiar Epiſtles* are compos'd, as if they were to be ſpoken in the Senate, or the *Forum*. But 'tis impoſſible to enumerate all the Blunders of this kind.

There is another ſort of *Meteor*, which conſiſts not in uſing a magnificent Stile on a mean Subject, but in uſing a vicious Sublimity on a Subject truly great. I call all that vicious Sublimity, which ſeems to be ſublime to ſome Perſons, but is not really ſo. They offend in this kind, who think every thing ſublime, which is obſcure. Ask them who are the ſublimeſt Orators, and they'l tell you the Panegyriſts on the *Cæſars*, or *Tertullian*, or

or ſome later Imitators of them: But *Cicero?* he is not worth mentioning, the Boys at School can underſtand him. With them *Tacitus* is far beyond *Livy*, becauſe he is more obſcure: And *Perſius* is their Darling in Satyr, becauſe after ſo many Comments of learned Men, his Senſe is yet in the dark. They wonder *Virgil* ſhou'd carry the Prize in Epic Poetry, who is much eaſier to be underſtood than *Lucan*, *Statius*, *Claudian*, *Prudentius*, and ſeveral Moderns. They deſpiſe *Horace*'s Odes, where they underſtand him, but when he ſoars out of their Reach, they admire him; then he is ſublime, and another *Pindar*.

A Man may wonder how it ſhou'd enter into any one's Head to affect Reputation, by writing obſcurely, and to admire Obſcurity in others, ſince Speech was not given us to darken, but to reveal our Thoughts. The Cauſes of this Error are many: For beſides that Things which lie conceal'd are generally more regarded, ſome imagine that an Author, who, they agree, always underſtands his own Book, muſt neceſſarily be ſuperior, in that reſpect, to you, who do not underſtand it, becauſe he comprehends what you cannot. Others, becauſe in their Childhood they cou'd not underſtand Writers who were truly ſublime, have been accuſtom'd at School to confound the Notions of Obſcurity and Sublimity together: 'Tis the ſame with them who admire thoſe who are great Authors indeed, but yet are hard to be underſtood; for 'tis common with us to admire the Virtues and Vices promiſcuouſly of thoſe whom we

we eſteem. Laſtly, others aſcribe to the Author himſelf, the abundance of Wit and Learning, which is requir'd in Expoſitors to be able to comprehend him. And what muſt that be, which a *Heinſius*, a *Caſaubon*, a *Grotius*, a *Salmaſius*, or a *Scaliger* can ſcarcely penetrate?

I remember a Gentleman of this Taſte was once boaſting of his Eloquence to me in theſe Terms: *D' ye know*——ſays he, naming a Perſon of great Learning, *they cry him up for a wonderful Scholar; but no matter for that: I wiſh you had ſeen the Letter I writ to him a little while ago. I waited on him the next Day, and ask'd him, if he had receiv'd it. He told me, he had, and deſir'd I wou'd inform him what I meant by it. As if, ſaid I to him, you did not know. He ſwore he did not underſtand a word of it. I took pity on him, and expounded it to him: In ſhort, he was forc'd to confeſs, that if I had not come, he ſhou'd never have gueſs'd what it was I deſign'd to tell him.* At this he look'd me in the Face, and burſt into a Laugh; I laugh'd alſo: and let the Reader judg which of us had moſt Reaſon to laugh.

If, beſides theſe Cauſes of affected Obſcurity, a Youth happens to have an inſipid Tutor, who is perpetually inculcating to him the σκότιον, σκότιον of * *Quintilian*; that is, who commends to him the moſt intricate Writers above the reſt, that himſelf may be thought to underſtand them; and praiſes his Scholars, with the Rhetorician in the ſame Place, for their Obſcurity; *ſo much the better,*

* Quintil. Inſtitut. Orator. lib. 8. c. 2.

I don't underſtand it my ſelf: 'tis eaſy to ſee whence his Pupil's Reverence for Obſcurity proceeds. But a Man need not take Pains to be obſcure, ſince, as Examples of many of the Firſt-rate Writers teſtify, 'tis ſcarcely poſſible for us to avoid it, eſpecially in the ſublime Stile, when we endeavour to ſay lofty Things in lofty Words: for when we labour to form a great Image of a Thing in our Mind, we often croud ſo many Ideas together, that the Imagination is confounded and perplex'd; and we can't tell what it is we are conceiving, which neceſſarily renders the Expreſſion dark and involv'd. Sometimes the Image is form'd diſtinctly in the Mind, but we are at a loſs for Words equal to it; and while we ſeek too far for them, we become unintelligible. And ſometimes we ſtrive to comprize a great Thought in few Words, to increaſe the Force of the Expreſſion; which, if rarely us'd, and with Perſpicuity, makes a Stile very ſublime: but how readily we ſlide from hence into Obſcurity, the Inſtance of *Tacitus* declares. This is to be excus'd in great Writers, and not to be imitated, eſpecially by thoſe who can only imitate their Faults.

They alſo miſtake *Meteors* for Sublimity, who think every thing to be ſublime which is rare and extraordinary. They deſpiſe Words and Phraſes of common uſe, and obſerve nothing in an Author as they read him, but what is ſeldom to be found. They throw aſide *Cicero*, *Caſar*, *Cornelius Nepos*, and *Terence*; for theſe afford no Materials for their Common-Place-Book. But *Barclay* has Charms,

and ſupplies them with a Treaſure of choice Words, Phraſes, Forms, Sentences, and Tropes, as they chuſe to call them. The Poets, particularly the Modern, have many Raritys; and, above all, *Prefaces*, *Inſcriptions*, and *Programmata* abound with Phraſes, according to their own Saying, *worthy Cedar and Gold*.

A huge Collection of this kind being made from the Poets, Orators and Philoſophers of all Ages, they form a Stile at laſt, which is juſt like a Cabinet that is deſign'd to hold only the Wonders and Curioſitys of Nature and Art.

Theſe Men will never debaſe themſelves ſo far as to call *Cicero*, *Cicero*; but are taught by their Phraſe-Book to call him, *Arpinas noſter*; *Plautus* is, *Familiaris noſter Sarſinas*; and *Horace* muſt never be *Horace*, but *Venuſinus Cygnus*, *the Venuſinian Swan*; and if they happen to compare him with *Virgil*, they'l tell you they are comparing * *Tears* and *Sighing* together. As great a name as *Homer* is, he muſt not be call'd by that, but is to be expreſs'd by a Scrap out of *Horace*, *Is qui nil molitur ineptè*; and *Martial* is *Bilbilitanus Argutor*. They can't ſpeak of the moſt ordinary things, nor even put up their Addreſſes to Heaven, but it is the Cant of *Viridarius*, or ſome Book of Forms.

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* *This Expreſſion is taken from a Saying of* Auguſtus, *who ſitting once between* Virgil *and* Horace, *ſaid merrily, he ſat between* Sighing *and* Tears: *for one was troubled with an* Aſthma, *and the other with* Rheumatick Eyes.

But

But they are altogether miſtaken, who eſteem uncommon Expreſſions to be always ſublime: *Cæſar* was of another Opinion, and ſaid, *An unuſual Word ſhou'd be ſhun'd like a Rock.* Monſters themſelves wou'd be beautiful, if Rarity cou'd make them ſo. If in a ſerious and ſublime Diſcourſe, a Man ſhou'd uſe the fantaſtical Adjectives and Words of *Plautus*, as *ipſiſſimus, geminiſſimus, excluſiſſimus, occiſiſſimus, Sycolatronidæ, argenti exterebronidæ, fuſtitudineæ, ferricrepinæ Inſulæ*, which were invented only for the Stage, to ſet the Audience a laughing; who does not ſee it wou'd be utterly ridiculous? They who always call *Alexander* the *Pellæan Youth*, and *Ariſtotle* the *Stagyrite*, think they ſpeak magnificently; as if the names *Alexander* and *Ariſtotle* had not much more Majeſty in them. And wou'd not he beſtow a very noble Appellation on the Emperor *Charles* V. and *Henry* IV. of *France*, that ſhou'd call one, *the Youth of* Ghent, and the other, the *Bernoiſe?* He who calls *Pindar*, *Thæbanæ Lyræ Fidicen*, *the Luteniſt of* Thebes, imagines he ſpeaks more grandly than one who only calls him *Pindar*; when at the ſame time he wou'd himſelf ſooner be term'd *Pindar*, than *the Luteniſt of* Thebes, or any other Place in the World. And thus ſome will not be prevail'd with, on any Terms, to ſay, in Latin, *Omnibus eſt notum*: No; it muſt be, according to their Phraſe-Book, *Et Lippis & Tonſoribus eſt notum.* But 'tis to be preſum'd, theſe honourable the *Lippi & Tonſores* are no great Grace to a magnificent Diſcourſe. They fancy alſo, they extol a thing wonderfully, if they ſay 'tis A. Gell. l. 1. c. 10.

as exalted among the reſt of its kind,

Quantum lenta ſolent inter Viburna Cupreſſi:

Never conſidering this is the Compariſon of an honeſt Countryman, whoſe knowledg lay chiefly in Fields, Meadows and Trees.

And thus *Figurative* Words, tho more rare than *proper*, are not therefore always more ſublime: But we are ſo far from being Gainers, by changing the laſt for the former, that it is frequently a Diſadvantage to us. In ſpeaking of the Excellence of Man, it does not heighten the Stile to uſe *Mortal*, inſtead of the known and daily word *Man*; and there is more Dignity in ſaying properly, *it thunders*, than in ſaying, *the Heavens bellow*. He that calls the Sea, *Foſſam Ponti*, *the great Dyke*, wou'd uſe a more ſignificant word, if he call'd it by the common name *Sea:* And ſo they don't mend themſelves, who exchange the word *Earth*, for *the Great Ball*; and *Sea*, for *Neptune*'s *Pond*, &c. becauſe they reject a more ſignificant word for a leſs. And the ſame may be ſaid of rejecting a decent word for one unſeemly and foul; ſuch as *Varro*'s *Nubes aquam vomentes*, and *Furius*'s *Jupiter Alpes nive conſpuens*; concerning which *Cicero* has wiſely ſaid, *Since 'tis a principal Beauty in a tranſlated Word to have it ſtrike the Senſe, we muſt be careful to avoid borrowing Words from ſuch things as preſent an impure Idea to the Mind. I wou'd not ſay, the Republick was caſtrated by the Death of* Scipio, *nor that* Glaucia *is the Dunghil of* Curia; *for tho the Similitude is right, yet the Thought is ſordid and unclean.* Let them conſider

De Oratore, l. 3.

conſider this, who delight to ſay, *vomit Curſes, belch out Blaſphemys, piſs on his Father's Aſhes*, &c.

Neither do they diſtinguiſh a *Meteor* from Sublimity, who affect too exquiſite an Ornament in the ſublime Stile, and always hunt after meaſur'd Periods, Stops and Pauſes, and Antitheſes, and Compariſons, exactly anſwering one another; and contrive to repeat Words and Sounds in equal time, to begin and end alike; and to have round Sentences, unexpected Clauſes, and a ſmart playing with Similitudes, Oppoſitions, and Ambiguitys of Words; to rehearſe Sayings and Actions of the Antients; and to bring, I will not ſay to haul, every thing in the World, by an ingenious Allegory, into their Subject. If ſome of theſe Particulars are ſparingly us'd in a pleaſant Diſcourſe, they paſs well enough; if they are thick ſown, they are abominable, even in a ludicrous Argument; but in a ſerious and ſublime one they are monſtrous, and not to be endur'd, and are as indecent as if a grave Man ſhou'd go to dance a Jig in a publick Aſſembly.

Theſe Delicacys were not much reliſh'd in *Auguſtus*'s Age; *Ovid* alone ſeems to have pleas'd himſelf with them ſometimes: but in *Nero*'s Reign they began to be in faſhion, as *Seneca*'s Writings demonſtrate; and a little after, Eloquence was made to conſiſt wholly in them, as the Complaints of * *Petronius* and *Quintilian* inform us.

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* Petron. Init. Satyr. Quintil. lib. 1, 8.

From hence this Cuſtom paſs'd into the Church: *Chriſtians and Prieſts of God*, ſays *Jerom*, *are not aſham'd to pun, and trifle with ambiguous Sentences, which deceive the Speaker more than the Hearer, as if they were handling ſome ridiculous Subject.* Many of the Fathers have ſtuff'd their Writings with theſe Fooleries, and propagated them to our Age; and ſo heartily are they embrac'd by ſome of our Preachers, that Poſterity, I queſtion not, will inherit them. In the mean while, 'tis to be lamented, that Men ſhou'd trifle moſt in thoſe Diſcourſes, in which they ought to trifle leaſt.

Epiſt. ad Pammachium.

When theſe Decorations are aptly and judiciouſly imploy'd, they ſometimes render a Stile more witty and gay, but never more great and ſublime: for they detract as much from the Gravity of a Diſcourſe, as they add to the Spritelineſs of it; and *Demetrius* ſays rightly, ἡ ὁμοιότης, &c. *Similitudes, affected Periods and Antitheſes, enervate and debaſe a Stile.* And the ſame may be ſaid of all Ornaments of this ſort: An elegant Example of which we have in *Auſonius*'s Epigram on the Death of *Dido*;

περὶ ἑρμηνείας.

Infelix Dido, nulli bene nupta Marito;
Hoc pereunte fugis, hoc fugiente peris.

Poor *Dido* ne'er a happy Husband try'd:
When the firſt dy'd, ſhe fled; and when this fled, ſhe dy'd.

Nothing can be more delicate, and yet nothing can be leſs ſublime: for he that reads this will not pity the Death of *Dido*, but admire

mire the Wit of the Poet; and the Beauty of the Antitheſis, and the apt turn on the words, *fugere* and *perire*, *fly* and *die*, have no other effect on us than to make us forget her. St. *Auguſtin*, who cou'd not read the Death of *Dido*, in *Virgil*'s fourth Æneid, without Tears, wou'd certainly never have moiſten'd his Eyes at this Epigram.

A ſublime Stile will admit a more ſparing Ornament, ſometimes, but not always; for if the Image we form in our Mind is truly great, it will appear the greater, the more ſimply 'tis expreſs'd: as a very beautiful Perſon is not ſo much adorn'd, as hid by a gaudy Dreſs; and delicious Meats are ſpoil'd by abundance of Seaſoning, and the Sweetneſs of a fine Voice is loſt in an exceſſive Shake. In ſhort, whatever looks beſt in its Simplicity, ought to be left ſo. That in *Geneſis*, GOD *ſaid, Let there be Light, and there was Light; let the Earth appear, and the Earth appear'd*; the Sublimity of which *Longinus* ſo much commends, is ſo ſublime becauſe it is ſo plain. περὶ ὕψους, cap. 7.

And if ſome Parts in a ſublime Diſcourſe are to have the Ornament of Words, we ſhou'd be careful that the Ornament ſhew it ſelf as little as poſſible. The Rules of Architecture require, that thoſe Pillars, which are added to a magnificent Building, for the ſake of Decoration, ſhou'd look as if they were continu'd under the Baſis, for the ſake of Neceſſity, to bear up the weight of the Pile. And thus in a Diſcourſe, that which is to adorn it, ſhou'd not ſeem introduc'd with that Deſign, but as neceſſary to ſuſtain the Force and Grandeur of the Theme.

We muſt alſo obſerve a Mean in our Ornaments, leſt we divert a Reader from the Paſſions we intend to excite in him, to admire the Delicacys of the Stile, and other mechanical Graces; as they do, who, as *Quin-*
Lib. 11, 12 *tilian* ſays, *weep in Sentences*, and *beg in Periods:* by which they only ſucceed to have thoſe who are pleas'd with the Harangue ſay, they heard an elegant Oration, but they are neither mov'd nor chang'd by any thing that was ſaid in it.

And under this Head Periphraſes are to be conſider'd, which many affect, but which do not always increaſe the Senſe in proportion as they multiply the Words; but when they happen to be flat and heavy, they enervate a Diſcourſe, and by the number of Words caſt a Cloud on the Vigour and Sublimity of the Sentence. How ſublime is this of *Virgil*,

Et Campus ubi Troja fuit!

Where *Troy* then ſtood, is all a common Field.

Put this into a Paraphraſe, and moſt of the Sublimity of it vaniſhes. *Lucan* having pompouſly deſcrib'd the univerſal Conſternation of *Rome* upon *Cæſar*'s Approach, adds,

Danda tamen Venia eſt, tantorum danda Pavorum,
Pompejo fugiente timent. Lib. 1.

Forgive theſe Terrors of Imperial *Rome*,
Her *Pompey* fled the Fears.

Pompejo

Pompejo fugiente timent. The Poet has ſaid more here in three Words, than if he had ſet out the Bravery and Worth of *Pompey*, and the Circumſtances and Conſequence of his Flight, ever ſo largely. I wou'd have them alſo apply this, who never permit a Subſtantive to go unattended, but ſend ſome ſplendid Epithet along with him to bear him Company.

Farther; they do not diſtinguiſh a *Meteor* from Sublimity, who think Sublimity conſiſts in high-ſounding Words, that promiſe ſomewhat conſiderable under them, but ſignify nothing extraordinary: *Horace* calls this, in a Poem,

Verſus inopes rerum, nugaſque canoras.
Art. Poet.

Verſes empty of Senſe, and ſounding Trifles. They who affect them, are either ignorant what conſtitutes true Greatneſs of Stile, or not being able to obtain it, wou'd conceal the Deficiency of their Wit by a Plenty of ſounding Words; as a gaudy Sute of Clothes ſometimes hides Beggary and Want.

Theſe are not ſollicitous what they ſay, or whether they ſay any thing, ſo they can but, as a great Maſter in this Art expreſſes it,

Sedul. l. 1. Operis Paſchalis.

Grandiſonis pompare Modis, Tragicoq; Boatu.

Swell out their Speech with bellowing words, and a tragick Fury. *Reſonantia, undantia, rorantia, rutilantia, radiantia, flammantia, coruſcantia, tumultuantia, bacchantia, quadrupedantia,*

dantia, are all admirable Words to fill the Mouth, and make a graceful Rumble, and then all is well; no matter for Senſe, or Connexion, or any thing of that nature: the ſound of *Carpathium Pelagus, æſtuantis Adriæ ſinus, fulgurent, quaquaverſum omnia quatiant, &c.* is Elegance enough, and wou'd almoſt tempt a Man to believe the Stile wonderfully ſublime; but if you look to the Senſe, you will find it is only a *Meteor*.

For this reaſon it is, that many prefer the Poets of the worſt Age to thoſe who flouriſh'd in the time of *Auguſtus*; they imagine *Claudian* begins his *Rape* of *Proſerpine* in a much loftier Stile, than *Virgil* does his *Æneids*, or *Ovid* his *Metamorphoſes*.

* *Inferni Raptoris Equos, afflataque curru*
Sidera Tænario, caligantesque profunda
Junonis Thalamos, audaci promere cantu,
Mens congeſta jubet.

Let us ſee, by this Example, if a Pomp of Words cannot impoſe on a Reader, to make what he reads ſeem greater than it is. Thoſe ambitious Epithets, *Raptor infernus*, *Currus Tænarius*, *Thalami caligantes*, *Juno profunda*, *Cantus audax*, and *Mens congeſta*, are more ſounding than ſignificant; and how ſhall we conſtrue, *Mens congeſta jubet promere* or *pro-*

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* The horrid Horſes, and ſulphureous Car,
Which bore aloft th' Infernal Raviſher;
And, riſing from the diſmal Shades of Night,
Obſcur'd the Stars, and blotted all their Light:
The darkſom Spouſals of the raviſh'd Fair,
My daring Verſe adventures to declare.

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dere, as others read it, *Cantu Equos & Sidera curru afflata?* I had rather the Poet had open'd with ſinging the barbarous Act of *Pluto*, the cruel Hands of the Raviſher, and the rough Arms which ſeiz'd the Daughter of *Jupiter*, the ſole Delight of *Ceres*, a Goddeſs deſerving perpetual Day, and carry'd her down in their rude Gripe, vainly crying out to her Father and Mother, thro the vaſt Abyſs to everlaſting Shades.

But *Claudian* begins with nothing of this; the Raviſher's Horſes appear, the Chariot follows, and *Proſerpine* is not ſeen till ſhe is in the Nuptial Bed, when ſhe is now become the *nether Juno*, perhaps leſt the Rape ſhou'd have touch'd us with Commiſeration. The Marriage-Bed is call'd *darkſom*, which they will think no Misfortune, who do not deſire Light in ſuch a Place. *Claudian*, therefore, has neither conceiv'd nor expreſs'd a great Image of the Action, which is his Subject, in the Barbarity of which the Horſes of *Pluto*, and his Chariot and *Proſerpine*'s Nuptials are not concern'd: 'Tis the Rape it ſelf is the principal Part. But our Poet has manag'd juſt like a Limner, who ſhou'd paint a Chariot, drawn by four Horſes, cloſely cover'd up; and in another Quarter, at a remoter Diſtance, a Bed in the Dark, with this Inſcription, *The Rape of* Proſerpine. How much better does *Ovid* begin his Metamorphoſes,

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas,
Corpora——

He

He ſums in few Words, and thoſe perſpicuous, the whole Grandeur of his Argument; to ſay nothing of the beginning of the Æneid, and the ſecond Book of *Lucretius*, than which hardly any thing can be more ſublime.

'Tis not to be wonder'd at, if the Verſes of ſome modern Poets, that were not comparable to *Claudian*, who we allow had a great deal of Fire, have the ſame Misfortune to carry more Sound than Senſe: For 'tis much eaſier to collect ſhining Words out of the Poets, or from the *Theſauri Phraſium Poeticarum*, as ſome do, than to produce a noble Image in the Mind.

But of all *Meteors*, none have a greater appearance of Sublimity, than thoſe which *Quintilian* calls *præcipitia*, and others *tumida*, *turgida*, and *inflata*; which are ſwollen, and flatulent, and full of Tumor. A Tumor in Stile, is a certain Exceſs of Elevation, into which all are betray'd, who poſſeſs a Strength of Imagination rather than of Judgment; and whenever they wou'd ſpeak magnificently, make uſe of every thing that ſerves to exalt a Stile, but obſerve no Decency or Moderation.

If theſe Perſons wou'd form a *great* Image, they form a *vaſt* one; inſtead of a ſublime one, they make one which is enormous; and for an admirable one, they invent one wholly incredible and prodigious. They can't think of a tall Man, but they make him a Giant, and they magnify a valiant Man into a perfect Romance-Hero. 'Tis a noble Image of Friendſhip in *Cicero*, when he ſays, *Non Aqua, non Igni, non Aere pluribus in locis utimur quam Amicitiâ:*

In Lælio.

Amicitiâ: Not Water, nor Air, nor Fire are us'd in more Places than Friendſhip is. But if any one, in order to outgo *Cicero*, ſhou'd ſay, *Friendſhip is us'd in far more Places than Air*, he wou'd ſtretch it beyond juſt Bounds. To ſay, *It is come to this paſs, that no body is aſham'd of Wickedneſs, but many glory in it*, is a great Idea of a corrupt Age; but it wou'd be overlaſhing to ſay with *Seneca*, *Nullum intra ſe manet hodie Vitium, adeo unuſquiſque ſua amat, ut nolit peccare, niſi adſit Teſtis. Vice does not now lie reſerv'd within it ſelf, but every one is ſo in love with his own, that 'tis his Ambition to ſin before Witneſſes.* Epiſt. 93.

They who are pleas'd with ſuch *Meteors*, give their Fancy ſometimes as great a looſe in Proſe as the Poets can do in Verſe, and even a greater. *D. Brutus*, ſays one of them, *conquer'd the* Gallæcians, *and all the People of* Gallæcia, *and the River of Oblivion ſo dreadful to the Soldiers; and march'd not back till he had travers'd the Shore of the Ocean, and ſeen the Sun ſinking into the Sea, and the Fire extinguiſh'd in the Water; not without an awful Fear of having committed a ſacrilegious Preſumption.* Florus, l. 2. c. 17. Another thus deſcribes a temperate Region: *No Clouds ever ruffle the Sky, no Froſts deſtroy, nor Summer-Heats ſcorch up the Corn.* Barclay. If they praiſe a wiſe Man, they'l ſay, *He is harder than Adamant; Darts are ſo far from piercing him, that even Battering Rams and Engines of War, which lay flat the higheſt Towers, and beat down the ſtrongeſt Forts, cannot ſhake him. He is firmer than the Walls of* Babylon, *of* Carthage, *and of* Numantia, *and the* Capitol *it ſelf. Let a ſhower of Arrows be caſt* Seneca.

on him, they will not wound or hurt him, nay they will not touch him. When they extol any King or Prince, he is more *Alexander* and *Julius Ceſar*, than *Alexander* and *Ceſar* were themſelves; and if the Fervor of Imagination increaſes in them, then *the whole World is not a Baſe ſufficient to ſupport his Statue; there is not Paper enough in the Univerſe to deſcribe his Virtues, nor can it be perform'd with a Pen; it ought to be written with the Sun-Beams.*

Relation d' Eſpagne.

But in Verſe, what will not an impetuous Imagination, unreſtrain'd by the Judgment, preſume? Becauſe many things are permitted, it believes all are. Nothing is too vaſt and monſtrous for it to produce: Sometimes it is in the Clouds, then groveling on the Ground; now 'tis wrap'd above the World, and mingles Heaven and Earth together.

Cum variare volet rem prodigialiter unam,
Delphinum Sylvis appingit, fluctibus aprum.
Art. Poet.

When ſuch a Verſificator, ſays *Horace*, *has a mind to vary his Subject in an extraordinary manner, he'l ſend the Dolphin into the Woods, and the Boar into the Water.* One tells us of ſome Soldiers who were ſo ſet upon fighting, *That they continu'd to fight after Death, not conſidering they were dead.* Another ſays of a Mound, *The Poets wou'd have plac'd it among the Signs of the* Zodiack, *but that they fear'd its Height and Strength wou'd hinder the Courſe of the Sun.*

Auvray, Lett. 46.

If they deſcribe a Tempeſt toſſing the Sea, they take their full Swing: The Winds wage Wars,

Wars, the North-Wind prevails; he not only raiſes the Waves, but ſhoves whole Seas out of their Place; the *Ægean*, and *Tyrrhene*, the *Ionian* and *Adriatick* Seas are mix'd: The other Winds poſſeſs the Ocean; the Earth is delug'd, the Sea has no Shore, and is reſtrain'd only by Heaven.

Tunc quoque tanta Maris Moles creviſſet in Aſtra,
Ni ſuperum Rector preſſiſſet Nubibus Undas.
Lucan. lib. 5.

Above the Stars had ſwell'd th'aſpiring Flood,
But *Jupiter* with Clouds the riſing Seas ſubdu'd.

And even in Sacred Subjects their Fancy is as licentious. *Homer* might be allow'd to feign Monſters of Deitys, and make them be wounded by Men; upon which Miſchance the Champion *Mars* roar'd out,

Ὅσσον τ' ἐννεάχιλοι ἐπίαχον ἢ δεκάχιλοι.
Iliad. 5.

As loud as nine or ten thouſand Men (for he cou'd not certainly tell which) *ſhouting to the Battel.* But who can endure a Chriſtian * Poet feigning theſe Events at our Saviour's Birth,

—Stellataque Machina Mundi
Proſcripſit ferale Jubar, micuere ſecundo

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* Barlæus Hymno in Chriſtum, lib. 1. Heroicor.

Omine

Omine Sidereæ Facies: dum Pignora Cœlum
Tanta ſibi promiſſa putat: ſua Frigora fulgens,
Ægoceros mediâ voluit miteſcere Brumâ,
Et tepuit glacialis Hiems, deceſſit Olympo
Arctophylax, fugitque ſocia cum Conjuge Cepheus,
Et Chiron, Perſeuſq; furens, & Plejas & ipſe
Amphitryoniades.

The Starry Lights all baleful Rays ſuſpend,
And on the World the kindeſt Influence ſend,
Expecting awfully the great Event;
And in Mid-Winter Froſts and Snows relent:
Arctophylax in haſte forſook the Skys,
And *Cepheus* with his tender Conſort flys,
And *Chiron*, *Perſeus*, *Plejas*, *Hercules*.

Not to mention the Mixture of Chriſtian Myſterys here with the abſurd Fables of the Gentiles; in which Chriſtian Poets ſometimes ſtrangely indulge themſelves.

And ſince thoſe who have more Wit than Judgment, aim at a Sublimity in Words as well as in Senſe, they never ſcruple to adventure on any Expreſſion, but purſue after Tropes and Metaphors from one end of the World to the other; that which does not conform of it ſelf, is put on the Rack, and made to comply by Force. Unnatural Periphraſes are ſpun out, which cannot be pronounc'd in a Breath: whatever is ſurprizing in the Univerſe, the Heaven with its Climes and all the Stars, the People of all Lands and Nations, all the Seas, Lakes, Rivers and Mountains,

Mountains, all the Gods and Goddeſſes; in ſhort, all Monſters and Prodigys are liſted into the Service, and made to furniſh their Names, Sirnames and Epithets to our Writers, to accompliſh the Grandeur of their Diſcourſe. *Neptune* muſt contribute his Trident, *Minerva* her Gorgon Shield, *Phœbus* his Chariot and his Horſes, *Mercury* his Wings for the Feet, and *Hercules* his Club, and *Jupiter* his threebolted Thunder. With them *Xerxes* * is no longer King of the *Perſians*, but the *Jupiter* of the *Perſians*; Vultures are not Birds of Prey, but *living Sepulchres*; the *Heliotrope* is *the* † Methuſalem *of Flowers*; Arrows don't fly in the Air, but ‖ *feather'd Deaths poſſeſs the Skys*: they don't exclaim, in the uſual Phraſe, *Quid primum, quid deinde dicam? What ſhall I mention firſt, and what laſt?* but, *Quas Ariſtas Horreis inferam, quas relinquam? What Sheafs ſhall I carry into the Barn, and what ſhall I leave out?* One of theſe Oratorical Panegyriſts thus haſtens to a Concluſion: ** *I confeſs, being vanquiſh'd by the Grandeur of your Deeds, and blinded with the Light of the Antients, I am willing to deſcend in the cloſe of my Oration, and omit new Triumphs. Thus, if I had a mind to number the Ornaments*

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* Vide Longin. c. 2. † Gongora a Spaniſh *Poet.*
‖ Ennod. Paneg. Theodoric. dict.

** Vellem, fateor, ad orationis Terminum victus Geſtorum tuorum enormitate deſcendere, & novellas Adoreas, hebetatus Priſcorum Luce, tranſire. Quemadmodum ſi ætherei Axis in numerum redigere Ornamenta voluiſſem, &, Trionum Fulgore comprehenſo, Cœli Decorem impotenti Linguâ deſcribere, cederet divino Splendori mortalis Obſcuritas, jubaris Lampadi non ſufficeret humilium ſcintilla Sermonum.

of the Ætherial Axis, and comprehending the Splendor of the illuſtrious Wain, to deſcribe with my weak Tongue the Glory of the Heavens, mortal Obſcurity would yield to Divine Luſtre, and the Sparkle of grueling Words won'd not ſuffice to expreſs the radiant Lamp above.

Single and uncompounded Words alſo will not paſs muſter, if they happen to be commonly us'd; there is not Dignity, or Sound, or Senſe enough in them to pleaſe theſe curious Authors: Therefore new ones are to be coin'd, and old ones reſtor'd, where the preſent are not to their meaſure: *Dolphins* muſt not be *Delphini*, in Latin, but *Repandirostrum & incurvicervicum Pecus*; a great Danger is *Hypobrychium irrespirabile*; a Goat is *Animal reciprocicorne*; a Boar *Nemoriungus*; a Hind *Sylvicultrix*, &c. And here the Poetical Compounds of *Gero* and *Fero* ſtand them in ſtead; after the Example of which they can form ſeveral others; and Nouns Superlatives, and Patronymicks; and Verbs, as the Grammarians call them, frequentative, inchoative, imitative, and deſiderative: and, in ſhort, all words of a foot and a half, one of which ſhall take up a Line to it ſelf, are greedily ſought out.

When I ſaid above, that it conduc'd to the Sublimity of Stile, to make it bear the Impreſſions of a great and lofty Mind, many, who cannot diſcern true Magnanimity from Pride, will believe that to be ſublime, which is really inſolent and profane; which argues not a Contempt of little things, but of things far ſuperior to the Contemner himſelf, and of the higheſt Importance: and this is not a

Sign

Sign of a great, but of a proud and vain-glorious Mind.

Such a *Meteor* is the impious Return of *Pharaoh, Who is the Lord that I ſhou'd obey his Voice?* And that of *Senacherib, Who are they, among all the Gods of the Countrys, that have deliver'd their Country out of my Hand?* And of *Nebuchadnezzar, I will aſcend above the Heights of the Clouds, I will be like the moſt High.* Theſe are the ſwelling Speakers, who, as the Pſalmiſt ſays, *ſpeak loftily, who ſet their Mouth againſt the Heaven, and whoſe Tongue walks thro the Earth.* And ſuch is the Saying, by ſome attributed to *Auguſtus*, that *he wou'd gain the Victory even in deſpight of* Neptune. And that alſo of *Caligula*, who thus threaten'd his God *Jupiter*; Εἰς γαῖαν Δαναὸν πέμψω σε, *I'll ſend you packing to* Greece *again.* With the like Arrogance *Domitian* order'd his Procurators Letters to begin in this Form: *Dominus & Deus noſter ſic fieri jubet; Our Lord God commands it to be thus.*

Exod. 5. 2. 2 Kings 18. 35. Iſa. 14. 14. Pſal. 73. 8, 9.

The Poets are often guilty of this, and when they deſign to ſay ſomething great and ſublime, fall into proud and impious Expreſſions. So *Lucan* ſays of *Nero*, who ſucceeded to Princes that had obtain'd the Empire by Civil Wars and many Villanys: *Scelera ipſaque nefaſque hac mercede placent; Evil and Injuſtice are welcome when attended with ſuch a Recompence.* And comparing *Ceſar*'s Party and *Pompey*'s, he ſays,

Victrix Cauſa Diis placuit, ſed victa Catoni.

The Gods choſe the conquering Side, but Cato *the conquer'd.* He oppoſes, if not prefers, a ſingle *Cato* to all the Gods. *Hercules* in *Seneca*, if *Seneca* is the Author of that Tragedy, thus demands of *Jupiter* to be receiv'd into Heaven: *Why doſt thou delay? Art thou afraid of me? Or cannot* Atlas *ſupport the weight of* Hercules *added to the Heavens? Haſte* Jupiter, *and make the Gods ſafe in my Protection: You may lay aſide your Thunder. I will undertake to ſecure you, whether you aſſign me the Frozen or the Torrid Zone to defend. Be ſatisfy'd, and believe the Gods ſafe under my Care.* This is the Speech of a *Typhon* or *Enceladus*, not of a Hero. *Martial*'s Epigram to *Domitian*, in which he wiſhes him a long Life, is not unlike it:

Hercul. Oetæi, Act. 1. Scen. 1.

Eſſe velis, precor, ſerus Conviva Tonantis;
At tu ſi properas, Jupiter, ipſe veni.

Mayſt thou late become the Thunderer's Gueſt; but if thou art in haſte to aſcend thy Heaven, Jupiter, *do thou come down, and ſupply his Room.*

This Cuſtom of the Poets to accuſe, reproach, and upbraid the Gods, is proud and impious; and ſo are thoſe Forms of Speech, by which the Gods are ſaid, *invidiâ exonerari, probari, abſolvi:* and indeed all Expreſſions, which intimate a Contempt of Things that are by no means to be deſpis'd; ſuch as are Things ſacred, Probity, Piety, Juſtice and other Virtues, excellent Men, ſhining Actions and Sayings, Kings and Magiſtrates, our Country, Parents, Rights, Laws, and Cuſtoms, *&c.* Expreſſions which ſignify Contempt

tempt of theſe, have nothing of true Greatneſs in them.

If they happen to ſtrike us with ſome appearance of Sublimity, when utter'd boldly, and with a confident Air, it is, becauſe we are all proud Creatures, and are not only pleas'd to ſee our ſelves lifted above inferior things, which won'd not be a Fault; but at the ſame time that we debaſe our ſelves beneath things really mean and vile, we haughtily elevate us above thoſe which are truly excellent, as it were in revenge, to recover the Dignity we ſhamefully gave away to the other. Hence ſuch Sayings, as flatter this Vanity, are receiv'd with wonderful Pleaſure, and we regard them as delightful Reflections of our own Majeſty and Grandeur, and therefore applaud them as ſublime. This, wiſe Men aſſign as the Reaſon why an Audience is ſo tranſported with the Sublimity of any Diſcourſe; which is rightly judg'd, if they do but remember to diſtinguiſh between true Sublimity of Mind and Stile, and a vain flatulence of both.

But 'tis not a Fault in Writers, who introduce Perſons of an imperious Temper ſpeaking, to make them expreſs their Pride in their Speech. When *Servius Tullius* reprimanded the rebellious *Tarquin*, in theſe words; *What is this, Tarquin, which you have done? How dare you inſolently aſſemble the Senate during my Life? or place your ſelf in my Seat?* Livy. *Livy* admirably puts this Anſwer into *Tarquin*'s Mouth: That he fill'd his Father's Seat, rather as a King's Son, the Heir of his Kingdom, than as a Slave; and that *Servius* had

long enough preſumptuouſly inſulted over his Superiours. This was Pride in *Tarquin* who ſpoke it, but it is ſublime in *Livy*, who has drawn a ſtrong Image of his Pride in the Expreſſions. When the Nurſe, in *Seneca*'s *Medea*, objected to her, that of all her abundant means, ſhe had nothing now left her to revenge the Inconſtancy of *Jaſon*, the Sorceteſs replys;

Medea ſupereſt, hæc Mare & Terras vides,
Ferrumque & Ignes, & Deos, & Fulmina.

Medea *her ſelf remains; in her thou haſt Earth, Sea, and Fire, Daggers, the Gods, and Thunder too.* *Medea*, who ſays this, is proud, impious and raving, but *Seneca* excellently paints the Rage of a revengeful Woman in theſe words. On which account alſo, the *Meteors* of *Polyphemus* in *Ovid* are not to be cenſur'd; the Eloquence of *Polyphemus* is horrid, but the Verſe of *Ovid* is beautiful: for here, not the Thing which is repreſented, but the Repreſentation of it ought to pleaſe us.

I ſhall now treat of the third ſort of *Meteors*, which is ſo compounded of the two former, that *not only the Subject of a ſublime Diſcourſe ſhall be mean and low, but alſo the Sublimity of the Stile ſhall be vicious.* Theſe do not want their Admirers, Perſons who are ſo far from knowing how to condeſcend, that they ennoble the moſt vulgar things with a bloated Stile. With them Birds are call'd, *Pennata Tibia*, or, *alati Pedes*; a Virgin is, in Greek, παρθένος; and a Dunghil-Cock, ἀλεκτρυὼν. Ask one of theſe Gentlemen what Buſineſs

he follows, and perhaps he ſhall anſwer from *Sedulius*: *Ego decachordo Pſalterio inter beati Dogmatis Choros Davidicæ Modulationis Cantus exerceo*; meaning, that he is a Chantor of a Quire. Ask another, how he is, and he'll tell you, *Satis bene ſe in Caruncula Folliculo conſtitutum eſſe*; and if he is writing, he'll ſay, *Se aliquid Niliaci Papyro Gurgitis Calamo perarante contradere.* And if you ask in what Year ſuch a thing was done, he ſhall anſwer in this Deſcription; *Poſt Tempora incarnati Verbi, ignea Romphea in oſtio Paradiſi fonte lateris Chriſti extincta, ut Regnum Dei violentius raperetur*: or if his Madneſs runs more on a big Word than on Periphraſes, he'll reply from ſome old Record, that it happen'd ſuch or ſuch a Prelate, *Archiepiſcopans*, or ſuch a King * *Ptolomans*; and if he wou'd ſpeak more floridly, he'l ſay, ſuch a Gentleman landed in *Sicily* †, when *the World had not yet worſhip'd* Rome, *nor the Ocean ſubmitted to the* Tyber. Nay, 'tis a hundred to one, but he bids his Servant pull off his Boots, in the form of a certain magnificent Rhetorician: *Tu qui me inferior es, innitere Corporis tui Columnis, & ab his mortui Bovis Exuviis me libera. Thou who art my Inferior, plant thee on the Pillars of thy Body, and free me from theſe Spoils of the ſlaughter'd Ox.* Sedulius.

One invited his Friend into the Country in the Summer-Time, thus ‖: *Jam Ver decedit*

* Gloſſar. du Freſne, Verb. *Ptolomare.*

† Nondum Orbis adoraverat Romam; nondum Oceanus conceſſerat Tybri.

‖ Sidon. Apollinar. Epiſt. ad Domitium, lib. 2. Epiſt. 2.

Æſtati,

Æſtati, &c. *The Spring has now reſign'd to the Summer, and the Sun, exalted thro the extreme Lines, extends his Beams to the* Scythian *Axis. The World grows warm, the* Alpine *Froſt melts away, and the Earth is inſcrib'd with thirſty Chinks; the Gravel lies naked in the Fords, the Mud on the River Banks, and the Duſt in the Roads; and the Fountains, perpetually gliding, languiſh in their Courſe. The Waters are not only warm'd, but boil'd: and now, while one ſweats in Sattin, and another in Silk, thou, ſwath'd and wrap'd in thy Rugs and Freeze, and pent up in the cloſe Town, drouſily calleſt on thy Boys, who are pale with Heat and Fear, to conſtrue. But if thou haſt any Value for thy Health, withdraw thy ſelf immediately from the ſtifling City, and poſt down to my Lodgings, and in this gentle Receſs deceive the Inclemency of the Dog-Star. A vigilant* Reader, who has imploy'd a voluptuous Patience in reading the Epiſtles* of *Sidonius Apollinaris*, Biſhop of *Clermont*, will eaſily know the Stile. And this ingenious Author is always ſo conſtant to himſelf, that he can't ſalute a Man, but *he breaks out into a Salutation*; but when he writes to the Pope, *i. e.* to a Biſhop, his Brother, he has the Happineſs even to exceed himſelf: *The*‖ *Croud of the College*, he tells him, *tremble at him; and, in compariſon of his Gravity, the moſt reverend Seniors are mere Children; The ſpiritual Warriors regard him as a principal Standard-bearer of each Order of Saints, who reaches out the Hand of his Tongue to all wounded Conſciences.* 'Tis

* *Theſe are* Sidonius's *Words.*

‖ Sidonius ad Papam Lupum, Epiſt. 1. lib. 6.

no

no wonder now, that when he made his Submiſſion to the Pope, he ſtil'd himſelf *Drudge* and *Lacquey*, and even *Fellow-Leper* with the leprous Man in the Goſpel.

But 'tis in *Africk* that the moſt terrible *Meteors* have been produc'd. The whole Book of *Martian Capell* is one of them; the Title, *De Nuptiis Philologiæ & Mercurii*, *The Marriage of* Philology *and* Mercury, ſeems to promiſe ſome extraordinary Matter. Accordingly he begins it with an Invocation of *Hymen* in magnificent Verſe, and proceeds with the perfect Air of a Romance; all the Gods and Goddeſſes are brought into the Scene, and the Muſes take their Turns to ſing an *Epithalamium*. At length the Bride is led *into* Jupiter's *Houſe, whoſe Bulk was the World's Circumference, and which excel'd the Luſtre of the Stars in its ſhining Decorations, and ſtretch'd acroſs the* Zodiack *by the Newneſs of its Site.* Our Author condeſcends to talk thus, when he has a mind to be underſtood; but generally he is pleas'd to be far more obſcure. The firſt and ſecond Books, and the beginning of the third, carry you thro a blind Labyrinth, I know not whither; and when you have made your way thro this cloudy Maze into known Ground, you arrive at an Expoſition of *Grammar, the Reaſon of Letters, Syllables and Words.* And hence you travel on to *the Predicables of Logick*, and at laſt you diſcover, the Deſign of this Heroick Fiction is to lay down general Precepts of the Liberal Arts.

Tertullian's Treatiſe *De Pallio, of the Cloak*, does not yield to this dreadful *Meteor* an Ace.

The

The *Africans* had reproach'd him for laying by the Gown, and taking up the Cloak: and he could not forgive the Affront, but to revenge himself writ his *Apologia Pallii*, *The Apology of the Cloak*; where, after he has mention'd all the Changes of every kind, which an unlimited Imagination was able to suggest, in order to justify his own, and made several extraordinary Flourishes about the Cloak, he introduces the Cloak it self thus speaking: *Away! I will repress Ambition, and remove Impurity; Blemishes and Defects are cover'd over by me; this I clothe the first Teacher of Letters and Former of the Voice, the first Instructer in Numbers, and the Grammarian, the Rhetorician and Sophist, the Physician and Poet, and he that exercises Musick, and the Magician; my four-corner'd Robe covers all the liberal Study.* What Man ever talk'd more magnificently than this illustrious Garment? I wou'd have oblig'd the Reader with its Speech at large; but that its Stile in the rest is more obscure, in which Excellence it even goes beyond its Master.

To these two *African* Writers I may add a third, *Apuleius*, who abounds with Meteors, as you may observe, *Modò si Papyrum Ægyptiam*, to borrow one from the first Page of his Metamorphosis, *vel, Argutia Nilotici Calami inscripsum, non spreveris inspicere.* But this Author is in every one's hands, and is so highly in grace with some, that if a Man finds fault with him, they presently draw a Sentence of *Apuleius* upon him, and say he is *Invidiæ nefariæ lethali Plagâ percussus.* And who in his Senses wou'd speak against him,

since

since *Lipsius* himself is not afraid to vindicate his Stile against *isti de Arpinati Schola investes Pueri*, as he elegantly calls the Admirers of *Cicero?*

'Tis to be wish'd this prodigious Eloquence were not infus'd into Boys at School: For hence the first Corruption of Stile proceeds; a great many retaining that Notion of Sublimity, which they receiv'd from their Tutor, thro their whole Life: and if he has a false Taste himself, the Children are betray'd into the same Error; unless they happen to possess such a degree of Judgment in their green Years, as *Adrian Valesius* says was in his Brother *Henry*. The thing is worth relating: *Præceptor* Henrici *vocabatur* Rusellus, *&c.* Henry's *Preceptor was call'd* Rusell; *a very honest Man, but unlearn'd, and ignorant of the Art he profess'd: In Prose he affected the Eloquence of bloated and high-sounding Words, and to use the utmost Majesty and Cadence, and Descriptions which were not tolerable even in Verse, on the most trivial Subject. Such is his Description of the Day-break, which* Valesius *wou'd frequently repeat with a mighty Air of Gravity.* It began to grow light, and *Aurora* issuing forth as the Herald of a fuller Light to come, the Rising Sun comb'd his Locks yellow with Gold, and shot his Rays on high. *Valesius*, says *Adrian*, *had been ruin'd, if he had imitated his Preceptor; but the Judgment of the Scholar prevail'd over the bad Example of the Master.* How many Teachers are there who wou'd bless themselves, if they cou'd but reach this pitch of *Rusell?* for tho they can't soar so high, they appear very sublime in their

own

own Opinion, if they can inſtruct their Pupils to begin an Epiſtle thus: *Salutem a Fonte Salutis, Amice medullitus peramande*; and to cloſe, *Tuus per Saxa per Ignes, &c.*

But *Meteors* are to be found in modern Languages out of the Schools. The *Italian* Writers are full of them; and ſo are the *Spaniſh*, and many of the *German* copy after them. The preſent *French* are much more reform'd than their Forefathers, and abandoning theſe falſe Splendors, have arriv'd to underſtand the true manner of writing, if they can but preſerve it. 'Tis very difficult for that Nation to retain any thing long; but if they ſhou'd perſevere, they wou'd make the neareſt Approach to the antient Eloquence of *Greece* and *Rome*, in the time of *Demoſthenes* and *Cicero*. But there is a ſort of *Meteors* in all modern Tongues, which was unknown to the Antients; I mean thoſe Forms in which we teſtify Reſpect and Deference, call'd *Complements*, which the *Greeks* and *Romans* had no word to expreſs, and which ſome call *Terms of Honour*. Here by great and ſwelling Words, hardly any thing is ſignify'd; for *moſt humble and moſt obedient Servant*, or *Slave*, means no more than the *Grecian* χαίρε, and *Ave* with the *Latins*; not to mention other Forms more tedious and highflown. I wou'd not perſuade any to omit theſe, when the Faſhion has made them neceſſary; but 'twere to be wiſh'd ingenious Men won'd by degrees unlearn ſo trifling a Cuſtom, and that ſo many uſeleſs and impertinent Words might not continue to puff up and enervate our Diſcourſe.

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM